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# A MARRIAGE

# IN HIGH LIFE.

## BY LADY CHARLOTTE BURY,

### AUTHORESS OF "TREVELYAN," "THE DEVOTED," &c. &c.

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"I was compelled to *her*—but I love *thee*
By love's own sweet constraint."

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# PREFACE.

THE following pages, which I now offer to the public, may, perhaps, not attract general interest; they contain merely a few passages in the history of the heart and feelings of an individual placed in singular and trying circumstances; but those who should recognize beneath the feigned name of Lady Fitzhenry, one whom they may remember to have seen in the gay scenes of fashionable life, will probably feel some interest in the events which occasioned her first introduction into the world, and her sudden disappearance from it.

THE EDITOR.

# PREFACE.

A

# MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.

## CHAPTER I.

**A mon avis, l'Hymen et ses liens**
**Sont les plus grands, ou des maux, ou des biens;**
**Point de milieu; l'état du mariage**
**Est des humains le plus cher avantage.**
**Quand le rapport des esprits, des cœurs,**
**Des sentimens, des goûts et des humeurs,**
**Serre ces liens tissus par la nature**
**Que l'amour forme, et que l'honneur épure.**

*L'Enfant Prodigue.*

Towards the end of a London spring, that is to say, about the middle of August, was married by special license, at her father's house in Harley Street, Emmeline Benson to Ernest, Lord Fitzhenry, only son of the Earl of Arlingford.

The ceremony was like most others of its kind; the drawing-room was crowded with relations and friends on both sides, dressed in congratulatory smiles, and new bridal finery.

Emmeline's father, an opulent city merchant and banker, appeared arrayed in a complete new suit for the occasion. The first gloss was not off his coat, which hung stiff upon him, as if not yet reconciled to the homely person to which it was destined to belong, while each separate bright button reflected the collected company. His countenance glowing with happiness, he busied himself in attentions to his guests, provoking, by his remarks, those congratulations which flattered his pride and parental fondness; and, with bustling joy, making the necessary preliminary arrangements for the ce-

remony about to take place, which was to raise his only and beloved child to that elevated situation in life, in which it had ever been the first wish of his heart to see her placed, and which his partial affection thought her so well fitted to grace.

Mrs. Benson's feelings seemed of a less joyous nature, and sometimes, even a tear started into her eye, in spite of herself, when she endeavoured to smile in return to the kind wishes of her friends. She was too fond a mother not to feel painfully the loss of her daughter; and that feeling was not unmixed with anxiety, in giving her to one of whom (of late years at least) she personally knew but little.

All were now assembled, excepting the bride and bridegroom. The father of the latter, apparently as much delighted as Mr. Benson himself with the intended union, being of course among the company. But Lord Fitzhenry did not appear! Various conjectures were formed as to his absence. One person declared he had observed his carriage at the door of his lodgings as he had passed; another, that he was certain he had seen him in a distant part of the town not long before. The delay was beginning to be awkward, and at every distant sound of wheels, both fathers looked anxiously along the street, but in vain.

Gradually the conversation of the guests lowered itself into whispers, as some new surmise was started with regard to the possible cause of this strange absence of the most important personage at so important a moment. But even these whispers died away from lack of new ideas on the subject, and the now total silence was only occasionally broken by the rustling of the clergyman's surplice, when he left his post before the large family prayer-book (laid open ready at the marriage ceremony) with the benevolent wish, by some common-place observation, to dissipate the unpleasant feelings which seemed to infect all present; or when he followed Mr. Benson to the window, whither he had taken up his station of observation in the hopes of being the first to give the much

wished-for news of the approaching bridegroom. Poor Mrs. Benson's cheeks became momentarily of a deeper and deeper dye, and she betrayed her anxious agitation by the nervous twitching of the gold chain round her neck, to which was suspended her daughter's portrait, and the constant arranging of her lace shawl, which she regularly each time pulled off her shoulders. At last, the welcome rattle of a carriage driving furiously was heard. It stopped at Mr. Benson's door, and in a minute Lord Fitzhenry, with a flushed cheek, hurried into the drawing-room.

Awkward as such an entrance must naturally be, still his agitation seemed even beyond what circumstances of the moment would have been likely to produce on a young man of the world.

Lord Fitzhenry, at twenty-seven, was remarkably good-looking; and on his countenance and whole figure was that stamp of high birth, which, even where beauty does not exist, more than compensates for its absence. The general character of his countenance was that of openness and good humour; but an agitated, even a melancholy expression now clouded it, which all noticed.

"Marriage is certainly an awful ceremony," whispered an elderly lady to Mrs. Benson; "and I am glad to see his lordship betraying so much feeling and seriousness at such a moment. It is a good sign in a young man." The poor trembling mother scarcely heard the remark, nor was there much time for more observation, for Mr. Benson had already left the room, and in a few minutes returned, leading in his daughter.

Emmeline was nineteen. She was slightly formed, had a most winning countenance, innocent laughing eyes, and a delicate, fair complexion, although now deepened into crimson, in her cheeks, by the agitation of the moment, as was very apparent, even through the folds of the beautiful lace veil that hung all over her.

The marriage ceremony commenced immediately. As it proceeded, the bridegroom trembled violently. When called upon to pronounce his vow, his voice was scarcely audible; and as he placed the ring on his bride's hand, he nearly let it fall to the ground.

But all was soon finally said and done—so few are the words which, once read over, totally change our existence, and fix our fate in life for ever! The usual congratulations passed, and the chaise and four, decorated with bridal favours, rattled to the door.

Emmeline threw herself sobbing into her mother's arms—the first sob, since those of childhood, which had ever been wrung from her light heart. Her proud father gaily kissed her cheek, addressing her by her new title of "Lady Fitzhenry;" then, drawing her arm within his, hurried her down stairs, placed her in the carriage, into which the bridegroom followed, and the "happy pair" drove off as fast as four post-horses could convey them.

How blank such moments are to those who remain behind! The company soon separated, after the usual breakfast, and Mr. and Mrs. Benson were left alone.

All excitement over, the deserted mother's spirits then sank; mournfully she paced the now silent room, and mechanically removed from the table Emmeline's work-box, which she had left behind her, gazing on her name, engraven on the lid, till her tears burst forth. Her distress roused Mr. Benson from the trance of exultation in which he had been lost as he watched the last bridal carriage that had driven from the door, and he kindly hastened to his wife.

"Why, my good woman, crying! and on such a day! when you should be so happy—for shame! for shame!"

Mrs. Benson shook her head mournfully. "God grant it indeed *prove* a happy day! may our beloved child be so!" and she sighed deeply.

"Why, how can you doubt she will!" said her husband;

"she has every thing this world can give; rank!" (and he laid a great stress on that word) "riches, youth; and, for a husband, a most excellent and accomplished young man, of whom every one speaks well. None of your gamblers, jockies, spendthrifts. I am sure Emmeline and ourselves are the envy of all our acquaintance. Any one might be pleased and proud to see his daughter so well married."

Mrs. Benson again sighed, wiped away her tears, and then quietly returned to her usual avocations.

Meanwhile, Lord and Lady Fitzhenry travelled on, and a few hours brought them to Arlingford Hall, which, on his son's marriage, Lord Arlingford had given up to him, meaning to reside himself at a villa at Wimbledon; his health, which had of late been very precarious, making a near residence to town advisable.

Arlingford Hall, which was in Hampshire, had been completely repaired and refurnished for the new married couple; Lord Fitzhenry having himself been much there lately, superintending the alterations. At least, that occupation was always mentioned as an apology for his absence from town, and for his not attending more assiduously on his future bride.

During the journey, Lord Fitzhenry's agitation and abstraction rather increased, and it could no longer escape Emmeline's observation. His conversation was forced; in his manner towards her he was punctiliously attentive and civil—but perfectly cold and distant.

When they arrived at Arlingford, all the servants were assembled in the hall to receive them; a numerous and respectable group, who, by the tears of joy which some of them shed, seemed most sincerely to partake in the supposed happiness of their young master. One of them, who stood apart from the rest, even ventured to address him with particular congratulation as with the familiarity of an old friend, and to give Emmeline his blessing.

"Thank you, Reynolds, thank you," said Fitzhenry hastily, as he shook the old man by the hand.

Emmeline's heart was cast in nature's best mould, and this simple action of her husband found its way to it. She smiling raised her tearful eyes to his face, but the expression she there found, soon made her again cast them down. The scene seemed to have totally discomposed him; and, in an awkward, hurried manner, thanking the rest of the servants, he led the way to the drawing-room. Dinner was ordered directly, and all seemed so zealous to serve their young master and mistress, that it was not long coming; but still there was an awful pause.

Lord Fitzhenry walked up and down the room, forced himself to speak, then, suddenly, as if recollecting that some degree of gallant attention was to be expected from him, a bridegroom of only six or eight hours, he hurried up to Emmeline and helped her off with her shawl; but his manner was so odd, so unlover-like, that it at last alarmed even her innocent, unsuspecting mind, and she timidly asked if he was not well. He started at her question, and seemed much embarrassed; but, after a moment's pause, replied, "The journey, the hurry, I suppose; indeed, I hardly know what, but something has given me a dreadful headache."

And then, as if roused by her remark to a sense of the strangeness of his behaviour, he put more force upon himself, showed her the public rooms, her own sitting room, in which were collected books, musical instruments, and every possible means of amusement. In answer to her enquiries, explained to Emmeline who were her new relations that hung framed on the walls; and, when she admired the comfort of the house, and particularly of her own boudoir, he said something about hoping she would be happy in it, but the phrase died away in uncertain accents.

Dinner at length came to his relief; he then was attention itself, but the repast could not last for ever; and, when the

servants had left the room. Lord Fitzhenry's embarrassment returned worse than before. Emmeline had lived so little in society, and, consequently, had so little the habit of general conversation—and the six years during which she and her husband had been separated, had so entirely broken off the first intimacy which had existed between them when children, that, timid in his company, and now unassisted and unencouraged by him, she felt it impossible to keep up any thing like conversation. It was, therefore, no small relief when, after an awkwardly protracted silence, she saw him leave the room.

As the door closed upon him, Emmeline involuntarily fell into a reverie not of the most pleasing nature. "This is all very strange!" thought she; and over her usually gay countenance a sadness crept. She sighed, she hardly knew why; and, when her thoughts wandered back to her former happy home, her parents, and their doating fondness, some "natural tears" stole down her cheek, and she felt herself, as in a dream, neglected and deserted.

But Emmeline was not *in love;* and her husband's behaviour, though it astonished her, and though she felt it was not what it ought to be, did not wound her heart as it otherwise would have done.

Emmeline was very young, even for her age. With a most superior mind and character, with tender, even romantic feelings, her innocence and simplicity of heart were so great, and all her qualities had as yet lain so dormant, that her character was scarcely known even to herself; and, to common observers, she passed for a mere gay, good-humoured, pleasing girl. She was, however, no common character, nor what one would have supposed the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benson to have been. Nature sometimes seems to amuse herself with playing such fanciful tricks; and Emmeline's natural superiority made it appear as if she had been thrown into a sphere totally different from that for which she had been originally

designed, and that she now was only restored to her own proper station, when raised, by her marriage, to be the companion of Fitzhenry.

To explain how such a being came to be thus passively united to a man who seemed already to have repented the step he had taken, it will be necessary to go back a little in our narrative.

## CHAPTER II.

Do I entice you? do I speak you fair
Or rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you—I do not, nor I cannot love you?
*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Lord Arlingford had, early in life, entangled himself in pecuniary difficulties by every species of thoughtless extravagance, in which an expensive, fashionable wife had assisted him. Her fortune and health both soon declined, and a consumption rapidly carried her to the grave while still in the prime of life, and when her only child, Ernest, was but ten years old. That which extravagance began, indolence soon completed; and long before his son came of age, Lord Arlingford found himself, in the language of the world, to be totally ruined.

Mr. Benson had been always much employed and consulted by Lord Arlingford's family in all matters relating to business; and to him, in the present desperate situation of his affairs, his lordship was obliged to have recourse for advice and assistance. Mr. Benson had toiled all his life as a merchant, and was now one of the most opulent bankers in London. He had an only child; and to her he meant to bequeath all his wealth, provided she made a marriage to his choice; by which, he

meant one in that rank of life, which, with all his useful good sense, he had the folly to imagine essential to human happiness.

Being every way an excellent man of business, Mr. Benson was appointed to be one of the trustees, into whose hands it was now deemed necessary to consign Lord Arlingford's estate; in order, if possible, to retrieve his affairs, and protect the interests of his son.

One day, when talking over his difficulties with his client, and when Emmeline was but seven years old, Mr. Benson first proposed, in the form of a joke, as a means by which all might be set to rights, that their children should be united in marriage. He finished his speech by a loud laugh; but it was one of mere agitation, for he anxiously looked into Lord Arlingford's face to see how such a proposal agreed with the ancient, aristocratic pride of the Fitzhenrys.

Lord Arlingford for a minute made no reply; he kept his eyes fixed on the parchment he held in his hands. The table before him was covered with deeds, bonds, mortgages, and every awful sign of the irretrievable state of his affairs; and, strange as it may appear, he caught immediately at the idea, as to that which alone could save him from utter ruin. His answer, when at last it came, transported the ambitious banker with joy; and by degrees, and by constantly treating of the subject, the two fathers seemed to think it was a matter they had but to settle between themselves, and that there could be no difficulty whatever in a scheme which was to give to both what they both wanted. Mr. Benson's promises were most liberal, and Lord Arlingford subdued all the hereditary pride of his feelings, and seemed quite content to lay himself and his family under obligations to a man on whom he in return conferred so much honour.

As a first step towards bringing about this favourite scheme, Ernest, when, at home for his holidays, was constantly sent to Mr. Benson's, where he was of course indulged in his every

boyish fancy, and every species of amusement imagined for him in which little Emmeline could take a part.

On her birthday every year, a ball was given by Mrs. Benson, which was opened by her and young Lord Fitzhenry, while the two fathers looked on in admiration, and declared that they were born for each other.

At twenty, Fitzhenry left Oxford; he was then to remain abroad for three years; and, at his return, it was settled that the marriage should take place; although as yet, nothing had been said on the subject to either of those most concerned in the plan.

Before his departure, however, Lord Arlingford thought it proper to open the business to his son, and also to lay before him the embarrassed state of his affairs.

Such disclosures make little impression on young minds, to whom, as yet unacquainted either with its value or want, money is but a vague sort of blessing; and Lord Arlingford was forced to overcharge the picture to give it due influence on his son. He talked much of his own distresses, his sacrifices for the sake of his dear Ernest, and, when he had worked on his filial affections, mentioned merely as a passing thought the long projected plan of his union with Miss Benson. Ernest, starting, coloured and stammered out some undecided words. But finding no *positive objection* made, Lord Arlingford pushed on the affair—praised Emmeline—(then only thirteen years old), extorted from Ernest first, that he thought her a fine girl, and at last a sort of agreement that he would think of the proposal, and, on his return from abroad, marry her, and make his father happy.

Mr. Benson was informed of the favourable progress of their scheme, which he furthered by every means in his power; and Emmeline was soon taught to look upon Ernest as her future husband. On his taking leave of them before his departure for the Continent, he kissed her smooth young cheek; addressing her by the name of his little wife. But neither the

kiss nor the appellation brought even an additional tinge of colour into that cheek; although she might childishly have grieved at the loss of her almost only companion.

During the first months of his absence, Lord Fitzhenry wrote two or three times to Emmeline, once when sending her a watch from Geneva, and again with a chain from Venice; but he soon found more interesting occupations than composing letters for the capacity of a mere child: the boy had grown into a man, and if he did not actually forget the engagement into which his father had drawn him, he allowed it but little to occupy his thoughts.

Lord Fitzhenry first visited Italy; at Naples, he formed an intimacy with the English minister then residing there; and, on the removal of that minister to Vienna, Ernest followed him.

The three years allotted for his residence abroad, had already nearly elapsed; but, having acquired a taste for the habits of the Continent, Ernest begged for longer leave of absence; and by his letters, no less than by the accounts of all those who met with him, his foreign life seemed so much to have improved his mind and manners, that Lord Arlingford, whose purely worldly character saw little beyond such acquirements, agreed to his prolonging his stay; and he was the more willing to acquiesce in his son's wishes, as Emmeline, scarcely yet sixteen, was still in appearance and manners so much of a child, that any contemplation of her immed'ate marriage would have been premature.

Lord Fitzhenry, at twenty-three, with excellent and even superior abilities, naturally noble feelings, strong sentiments of honour, and a warmly affectionate heart, wanted only those serious principles of conduct, which his father had neither bestowed on, nor ever required from him. Had Lord Arlingford been asked whether or no he was an atheist, he would have resented the question as an affront; but, nevertheless, religion had never occupied his own thoughts, and

had never in any distinct form entered into the education of his son. The companion he selected for him during his residence on the Continent, was a young man of considerable abilities, who had been destined for the law; but who, having been early led abroad, and having a decided turn for a wandering life, was too happy to return to scenes in which he delighted, and to give up Lincoln's Inn, and studies, for which he had no relish, for the existence he preferred, in present, and the future chance of Lord Arlingford's patronage.

Such a companion, gay and thoughtless as himself, was not likely to supply the neglected part of Lord Fitzhenry's education; and thus, although gifted by nature with a mind and heart formed for virtue, in its highest acceptation, Fitzhenry was turned adrift on the world without any help or defence against its snares, except those common rules of worldly honour by which men, who may infringe nearly every law, human and divine, fancy themselves to be guided.

At Vienna, Lord Fitzhenry became acquainted with Lady Florence Mostyn, and that chance acquaintance influenced his whole future life and conduct.

Lady Florence, who had early in life been married to a man whom she had never loved, and whose understanding and character she could not respect, had every allurement, every charm to captivate, except that of innocence. Such a deficiency one might have hoped would have preserved a refined mind like that of Fitzhenry's from her chains; but, under the influence of passion, artfully excited, and the example of the society in which he lived, he fell completely in the snare purposely laid for him, and became the slave of an artful, bewitching, and violent woman.

In the intoxication of her society, every thing was forgotten or disregarded. In vain were his father's repeated injunctions that he should return home; in vain his self-reproaches at losing, in idleness, some of the best years of his life. And it was only when alarming accounts of Lord Arlingford's health

roused his better feelings, that he was induced to tear himself away from Greece, whither Lady Florence and her passive, accommodating husband had accompanied him; and, in the middle of winter, to set off for England with the hope and promise that they would join him there early in spring.

Six years had now elapsed since Lord Fitzhenry had left home. His person, character, manners—all had changed. His "Little Wife" was nearly forgotten; and when she did chance to cross his mind, he looked upon his engagement with her as a mere joke of childhood, and trusted his father would do the same.

From Italy, where he found the accounts of Lord Arlingford were still very alarming, he travelled day and night to make up for past negligence, and found his parent, on his arrival, but slowly recovering from a very dangerous illness.

Real feeling and affection broke forth from Fitzhenry's selfish, worldly father, on again beholding his son; and beholding him, as in truth he was, a son to be proud of.

Lord Arlingford's illness, by weakening his nerves, had given to his manners an appearance of sentiment unusual to him; and Ernest almost wondered how he could have been such a monster as so long to have deserted him. A constant visitor in his father's sick room, he found Mr. Benson. With a feeling not unmixed with remorse, he warmly thanked him for having supplied his place, and inquired after Mrs. and Miss Benson, as after old friends of his boyhood.

"Well, quite well," said Mr. Benson; "but Emmeline is so grown, that you will hardly know her again: however she is not altered in any way, I assure you; she has not forgotten her old playfellow;" and he looked cunningly into Fitzhenry's face, to observe the effect of this flattering assurance. "You have been a sad rambler, Lord Fitzhenry," he continued; "but now you are returned to old England, we shall, I hope, all live comfortably together; and I am sure you will be quite delighted with Emmy, although perhaps she is not just like

your foreign madams; but none the worse for that, I suspect —they don't make such good wives; and now that you have, as I may say, sown your wild oats," he added with a laugh, "you will not be sorry to sit down at home and enjoy a little home-bred, quiet English comfort."

Fitzhenry saw but too plainly the drift of all this, and he was totally at a loss for an answer. His eyes, fearful of meeting those of Mr. Benson, wandered round the room, till they fell on a view of Naples which hung over the chimney. The sight was not favourable to the picture of *English happiness* which Mr. Benson had just been presenting to him. Hours of rapture produced by the first intoxication of passion beneath an Italian sky, and amid scenes calculated to enhance every feeling of romantic enjoyment, rose up before him in an instant, and formed such a contrast to the homely, domestic comfort just held out to him, that his very soul sickened at the thought; and making some awkward sort of vague answer to Mr. Benson's *very pointed* remark, he abruptly left him.

Ernest had expected to have found his father irritated against him, in consequence of his long absence and his frequent excuses for not obeying his summons to return home. He also feared that the real cause of his protracted stay might have reached England, and he dreaded how much of his story, since they had parted, might have been made known to Lord Arlingford. But the manner of his father was so perfectly kind and cordial, that it reassured Ernest as to his secret being as yet safe, and at the same time filled his affectionate heart with gratitude and self reproach.

Some days after his arrival, when talking on various subjects connected with the place, estate, &c., Lord Arlingford suddenly said, "Mr. Benson, as soon as I am a little better, and fit for visitors, you must write in my name, and invite Mrs. Benson and Emmeline to come here. Ernest must be impatient to see his little wife. Eh, my boy?"

Ernest did not parry this second attack any better than the

first—he started, and stammered out something about "pleasure, honour." But his father did not, or would not, see his reluctance to touch on the subject; he returned again and again to the charge, said his happiness, his life, even, depended upon the marriage; and by the nervous irritation which illness had produced, and which opposition to his will increased, Ernest feared he spoke truly.

Harassed and perplexed, Ernest at last took courage, and resolved to confess to his father the attachment he had formed abroad—his unalterable, violent, decided devotion to another. Lord Arlingford, seemed breathless with anger and anxiety, and imperatively desired him to inform him who was the object of it.

Lord Fitzhenry cleared his voice, rose from his chair, paced the room, and twice, in vain, tried to speak; but at last making an effort, "she is a married woman," he said, "Lady Florence Mostyn." The name was scarcely audible.

"And is that *all?*" replied his father, much relieved. "Don't think you are telling us any thing new; we have heard of your pranks abroad, my boy; but you will not make the worse husband for having passed through the fire. And as for your *unalterable* attachment, that is all nonsense. So I thought, at your age, with *my* first love; for I had two or three *affairs* of the sort before I was married; and, indeed, never quite forgot one of my favourites."

"But surely, Sir, with such feelings——!"

"Feeling! stuff again," replied Lord Arlingford. "Why really, Ernest, you have learnt little of the world in your travels; I am sure any one of your young friends would laugh to hear you give such a reason for refusing a most excellent, and, I must add, advantageous marriage."

Although without principles, Ernest was shocked at his father's levity; he was in all the heroic romance of passion; to love more than one, to plight his faith to another, did not

strike him as morally, religiously wrong, but as sacrilege to the one adored being. All he could obtain, however, was delay, and that his father would allow him some little time for reflection.

Thus passed some months. Lord Fitzhenry occasionally met the Benson family; but Emmeline he hardly looked at, hardly noticed; although, when in her society, his manner towards her was perfectly civil; but it was the civility of indifference; his thoughts were fixed on another, and had he been asked the colour of Emmeline's hair or eyes, he probably could not have answered.

"Spring arrived, and with it Lady Florence. This event did not further Lord Arlingford's plan. Fitzhenry was more and more decided in his objections, and in his determination not to fulfil what his father called his engagement.

Many violent altercations passed between them, and, at last, in one of these agitating scenes, Lord Arlingford was seized with an apoplectic fit, and (as Ernest thought) fell dead at his feet. Horror-stricken, he raised him from the ground; medical assistance was procured, and life and hope returned after some days of dreadful apprehension and suspense; but the impression left on his mind was too strong to allow of further resistance; and, in an unguarded moment, Fitzhenry, attacked on every side, gave his reluctant consent to the hated union. His father allowed him no time to retract. His proposals were immediately made; though not without a secret hope, on Fitzhenry's part, of their being rejected, which, owing to the marked neglect with which he had ever treated her whose hand he claimed, seemed not unlikely. But, contrary to his expectations, his offer was accepted.

Emmeline, as has before been stated, was remarkably young and innocent for her age; she had been brought up in the idea that Lord Fitzhenry was to be her husband; and, although without any very decided preference for him, and

with a heart perfectly free, she had looked to her marriage as to a thing of course, and as to an event that was to secure her happiness.

His indifference, however, had not escaped her observation; and, her cheek reddening with offended pride, she mentioned it to her father, when, breathless with delight, he came to announce to her that Lord Fitzhenry claimed her as his bride.

Mr. Benson ridiculed what he called her conceit, her romance; exaggerated into compliments many a simply *civil* thing which Fitzhenry had, or possibly had *not*, said of her; set forth all the advantages of the marriage; used every argument which he knew her affectionate deference to him would give weight to; even hinted at his word being pledged, till he succeeded at last in silencing her doubts and scruples. The good and pious Mrs. Benson too was not quite free from worldly vanities; she told herself, and she told Emmeline, that so good a son must make a good husband; that it would be such a comfort to see her settled in life with one whom she had known since a boy, and of whom she knew so much good.

At last, with something between a smile and a sigh, Emmeline gave her consent, and all was thus finally arranged.

Seven thousand a-year was firmly settled on Lord Fitzhenry, and the residue of Mr. Benson's immense property promised at his death. He added likewise a *few thousands* of ready money for plate, jewels, equipages, &c.; "in order," as he said, "to set the young people a-going."

Every one was satisfied but poor Ernest. To his feelings, all this was hateful; and he was doubly shocked when he found, during the legal details into which he had now to enter, that Arlingford Hall, the abode of his childhood, although it had been long in the family, yet from not being entailed like the rest of the property, had only been saved by Mr. Benson's liberality; and, that in the involved perplexity of his

father's affairs and the urgency of his creditors, all the expenses of his late election had been defrayed from the same source.

Sick at heart, as soon as he could extricate himself from lawyers and papers, Ernest signified his intention of leaving town, in order, as he let it be understood, to superintend the repairs at Arlingford, but, in fact, to fly to Lady Florence, who was still in the country.

It was their first meeting since his marriage had been declared; and with an unprincipled, impassioned woman, he had to undergo scenes still more agonizing than those with his father.

Fitzhenry's love for Lady Florence was far beyond her power of appreciating—unable to do justice to his character, she could not trust to such devotion as he expressed, and as he really felt. He believed that for his sake she had sacrificed both honour and virtue, and his whole life, his every affection, he conceived would hardly repay the debt.

Ernest's heart was capable of love of the purest, noblest kind; and, even towards so unworthy an object, it partook more of the nature of his own character than of her's who had inspired it. During the period employed in preparations for his nuptials, instead of attending on his bride, Fitzhenry never left Lady Florence. Her power seemed strengthened by the very circumstances that should have lessened it; he accompanied her to town; and, even the morning of his marriage, on her entreating to see him, if but for a moment, he had flown to her bewitching presence.

A most violent scene ensued; it ended by a solemn vow on his part to remain true to her, his first, his only love, in thought, word, and deed. That Emmeline should merely be the mistress of his house; that, in public, he should behave to her with perfect attention and civility, but nothing more.

Hardly knowing what he did, and not till long after the hour appointed for the celebration of his nuptials, he left Lady Florence for Mr. Benson's house. Hence his flushed cheek,

and his agitated manner, the too true indications of his troubled soul.

Fitzhenry had no distinct religious feelings; but still, when he heard the sacred vow he was to pronounce (and of which he had never thought), with his lips still vibrating with that he had pledged to Lady Florence, no wonder those lips quivered. Although no dread of the anger of his God appalled his mind, yet, as a man of honour, he felt the atrocity of the act. Of Emmeline, of the poor victim, who stood trembling beside him, he hardly thought. He looked upon her as a mere obedient child without a character; perhaps, even worse, an ambitious, worldly being; and all his thoughts, all his compassion, were bestowed on Lady Florence and himself.

Fitzhenry wanted neither decision nor character. During their melancholy journey to Arlingford Hall, he had sufficiently surmounted his agitation to have decided on his conduct. He resolved to tell all to Emmeline, to let her fully enjoy the honours, the worldly advantages of the situation he thought she had in her union with him sought; to assure her he would endeavour to make her happy, but that she must never hope for his affections.

Often, after an awful pause, he resolved to speak, but each time his courage failed him; and finding all explanation by word of mouth impossible, he then resolved on writing to her. It was to compose this letter, therefore, that, after dinner, he left his bride, as has before been said.

Such a letter was not easily written; and Emmeline had some time to ruminate on her situation, before he returned. At last he came. He seemed in the feverish state of one who has taken a desperate resolution: he hurried up to Emmeline; asked her if she was not fatigued? if he could ring for candles? and then, without waiting for an answer, rung the bell violent till it broke. His hand shook so much, that he tried in vain to tie the string together again. Emmeline smiling said, she supposed she was more used to strings and knots, and begged

to assist him. As she took the cord, her hand accidentally touched his—it was icy cold.

Reynolds, the old servant, brought in the candles, and asked, if his lordship, "if my lady" would not have any supper? any wine and water? "Yes, some wine directly," said Fitzhenry, as if hardly conscious of his demand.

When it came, he endeavoured to pour out some for Emmeline; but twice, from the nervous skaking of his hand, he was forced to put down the bottle.

Emmeline was really alarmed. "Surely," again, she said timidly, "you are very unwell." He did not seem to heed her, but drank off a large goblet of wine, and then, with a steadier voice and manner, said—"I have something on my mind which I must make known to you—perhaps I should have done it sooner—I thought it best for both of us to write it," and he held out his letter—"Take it with you into your own room," he added, seeing she was going to break the seal. He took up a candle, gave it her, went with her to the door, put his hand on the lock, and said—"When you have read this, forgive me if you can;" then hastily seizing her hand, which he almost convulsively grasped, he left her.

What poor Emmeline's feelings were, can be better imagined than described.

In one short moment, a thousand vague fears and horrors passed through her mind. It was *her* turn now to tremble, as, with the dreaded letter in her hand, she hurried to her own room. She there found her maid, whose presence disconcerted her much; but she resolved to take off her gown speedily, and then dismiss her. Never before, she thought, had her attendant been so slow and tedious. She entangled or pulled every string into a knot. At last, her gown off—that beautiful lace gown in which her poor mother had that morning with so much pride arrayed her—all her bridal finery laid aside, she told her maid she wanted nothing more.

"Nothing more, my lady," said the maid astonished:

"shall I not put up your ladyship's hair? Shall I not wait to take away your candle? Mrs. Benson desired me to"—— and she stopped short.

"No, I want nothing," again said Emmeline, in a voice she could hardly command. The woman stared, busied herself still some time in the room, and at length, reluctantly departed.

When she was gone, Emmeline sat for several minutes with the letter in her hand, before she had courage to open it. At length, taking a violent resolution, she broke the seal, and read as follows:—

"When you have read this, you will, I fear, be tempted to upbraid and curse the writer; but I act according to my conscience, to my sense of honour, in imparting to you what I am going to unfold—at least, you shall not *now* accuse me of deceiving you—I think, I trust, I never have done so; for little as you have, I believe, lived in the world, still, unless purposely, artfully concealed from you, you must have been aware, that my affections have long since been disposed of, and that, at my return from abroad, they were no longer mine to bestow.

"Under such circumstances, I never should have renewed the offer of my *hand*; but parental authority, and the distressing and perplexing situation in which I found myself placed, extracted from me my consent to our marriage. But even in so doing, I did not attempt to *deceive*. You cannot accuse me of having, in any way, endeavoured to gain your affections. You saw me as I was, indifferent to you, and you were at liberty to refuse me: but you were content to become my wife on these terms—that is to say, of bearing my name, and sharing the poor advantages which rank affords.

"These you still *may*, still *shall* enjoy: but nothing more can I offer you; for every feeling of my soul is another's—forgive me for saying so; but this is no moment for disguise of any sort. To that other I am bound by every tie, every

vow of affection and honour. You will be shocked at hearing such sentiments from *me*—from your *husband;* but I should consider myself to be indeed the unprincipled villain you may deem me, if, with such feelings, I could, for a minute, look upon you in any other light than that of a sister. I know full well what love is; and you do not, cannot love me. Therefore I feel not your injuries to be what they otherwise would. You shall enjoy all the worldly advantages you have sought in your marriage with me—all the happiness which wealth—your own wealth—can bestow; and it shall be my endeavour, as far as I can, to make your life happy. You shall be completely mistress in your own house, and of all your actions. Your comfort shall ever be consulted; and I think I can venture to say for myself, that you may depend on my kindness, and even on my friendship; but my affections as a *lover*, as a *husband*, while the same heart beats in my breast, can never be yours.

"If I may venture, claiming no other right of a husband, to make a request, it is that this subject may never, in any way, directly or indirectly, after this fatal day, be mentioned between us. With regard to your own parents, and to my father, your own good sense and delicacy will, I dare say, dictate to you what conduct to pursue. But if you cannot agree to these, I confess, humiliating terms—if you desire an immediate separation, you have but to name your wishes. I will tell all to the world, bear all the blame, and agree to any arrangement which you and your father may choose to dictate.

"Whatever you have to say, write immediately, and put your letter into the adjoining room. In a short time all will be at rest in the house. I will then myself go for it. If possible, every thing must be fully settled and understood between us before we meet to-morrow morning.

"FITZHENRY."

## CHAPTER III.

> My husband! no, not mine—but we were wedded;
> This ring was here in hallowed nuptial placed;
> A priest did bless it.
>
> *Ellen.*

All those who have had trials in this world—and who has not?—must know that there are moments in our life during which we seem to live centuries! and that a few hours sometimes are sufficient to rouse, influence, and form a character for ever.

So it was with poor Emmeline! She who had never known a sorrow—she who had looked to her future life as to one scene of bright enjoyment, on a sudden saw the picture changed, and beheld nothing but trials, disappointment, mortification, and sorrow. She had at once to decide, and on one of the most important steps probably in her life, without a single friend to counsel and uphold her: and he who should have been that friend, that support, was the one against whom she had to arm herself, and exert energies of character, of which she did not even know herself to be possessed.

What Fitzhenry had said was true—she did not love him; that is to say, was not *in love* with him; but she had entertained a sort of girlish affection for the companion of her early youth, and it was impossible not to admire the handsome, accomplished, informed being he now was. Her innocent mind adding to these prepossessions, the light in which she had ever been taught to consider him, of her future husband, gave to her feelings something sacred and tender, so that she had looked to her union with him with stronger anticipations of happiness, than those which mere obedience to her father's wishes could have given.

Fitzhenry's letter fell from her hands, and almost hysterical sobs escaped from her heart. "What have I done to be so cruelly used, so scorned, so upbraided!" she could not help ejaculating; and again she seized the fatal letter. "He despises me for having trusted him; he even reproaches me for that, in which he alone is to blame. She would leave him; leave those paltry honours which he thought had been her object; leave him that wealth which had been the motive (she could no longer doubt it) of her having been sought in marriage by him; and with the vehemence of indignant feeling, she directly seized on a pen, in order to demand an immediate and total separation.

But scarcely had she written the first word, when, with the natural timidity of a young girl, she shrunk from the responsibility and *enterprise* of so desperate a step, and from all the publicity which she would, by it, draw on herself. She laid down her pen; pressed, with both hands, her throbbing temples, as if to quiet their agitated pulsations; and then, returning to the fatal letter, she perused it again and again, till gradually her most angry feelings were calmed. She *could* not curse him—*would* not upbraid him. His language to her, though harsh, was so open, so honourable! and then, with the happy buoyancy of youth, and of an innocent, unbroken mind—"I will make him love me yet," she thought "I will so consult his wishes in every thing; so play my hard part, that he shall see I am not the mere child, the worldly insensible fool he thinks me; he must in time love me, and we shall still be happy."

This was what her *feelings* dictated; and this line of conduct she told herself her duty to her parents required of her. She would not break their hearts by letting them know how they had been deceived; but, for their sakes, she would submit to her fate.

Happy in having thus reconciled her duties to her inclinations, she could not help picturing to herself *that* future to

which, with such fortunate credulity, she fondly looked, when she should have overcome her husband's unfavourable opinion of her, and won his affections; and, in indulging such flattering dreams, Emmeline sat some time lost in thought, till roused by the sound of hurried steps in the adjoining room. That room was Lord Fitzhenry's.

The drawing-room opened into a gallery, the first door in which was that of Emmeline's dressing-room; her bedroom was beyond; and beyond that again, but, having no communication with Emmeline's apartment, was Lord Fitzhenry's; it had been his when a boy; and that now allotted to Emmeline had been his father's.

The sound of measured steps in that room, like those of a person suffering from impatience and anxiety of mind, reminded her that she must answer her husband's letter. But, what could she write? She took her pen, but for long had not power to express a thought. At last, not trusting herself to look a second time at what she had said, she hastily wrote, and folded up a paper, containing the following words:

"I will not curse, I will not upbraid you; yet I have been most cruelly used and deceived. Your wishes shall be laws to me. You need apprehend no childish weaknesses or complaints on my part. In time, you will learn better to know her whom you have made your wife. And to God alone shall I apply for relief or assistance under any trial that may assail me.

"EMMELINE."

She opened the door into the gallery—all was silent. With hurried, trembling steps, she went into the drawing-room, placed her letter on a conspicuous part of the table, involuntarily looked round the room, as if to recall some of those gay, bright anticipations with which she had that day first

entered it; and then, with noiseless steps, regained her own apartment. As she went to it, she saw light beneath the door of Lord Fitzhenry's room. Satisfied that he was still up, and that he would look for her letter, she closed her door, and sat breathless, with flushed cheeks, to hear him pass into the drawing-room for it. In a little while, she heard him tread softly along the gallery. At the door of her room he paused—then went hastily on. On his return, he again paused.

"He listens," thought Emmeline, "to hear if all is quiet, and whether the insensible fool whom he has made his wife sleeps soundly;"—and tears of mortification again made their way down her face; again the door of her husband's room closed, and all was quiet.

The dawn of day found poor Emmeline in the same listening attitude in which she had sat when Fitzhenry passed her room—her hands clasped together, her eyes fixed on vacancy. She was roused by the extinguishing candle falling into its socket, and looked up astonished to see broad daylight. She went to the window to throw open the sash, that the fresh air might cool her eyes and cheeks: in drawing up the blind for the purpose, the string caught the rings on her finger. She started on seeing her wedding ring, and, above it, the circles of diamonds, rubies, etc., the presents of doating parents, and perhaps envious friends, on the morning of that ceremony, which was, they imagined, to secure her future happiness. "Alas!" thought she, "how they were mistaken!"

Emmeline soon felt chilled by the fresh morning air. She hastily bound up her loose locks, laid herself on her bed, and the fatigue of her mind (a feeling so new to her) procured for her the rest she needed.

She awoke with that confused impression of distress, which the unhappy know so well; which oppresses the mind even before we can clearly remember what occasions it. Still she

was refreshed by those few hours of sleep, and felt better able to encounter the dreaded meeting with her husband than she could have thought possible.

She got up and rang for her maid. From her window, she had seen Fitzhenry out before the house, and she hurried herself to be in the breakfast-room before his return. While she was dressing, she schooled herself in the part she was to act, and resolved to meet him with the unembarrassed kindness of friendship. Had she had to expect him *one* minute longer, her nerves would have failed her; but she saw him hurry towards the house. The servants had fortunately left the room. She heard his footsteps on the stairs, the door opened, and in he came. He was deadly pale; Emmeline went up to him,—held out her hand. Hardly knowing what she said, she made some remark on the weather, the heat, and, without pausing, in a hurried voice, asked him some other indifferent questions.

Fitzhenry returned the pressure of her hand, once looked in her face, apparently with surprise; tried to speak, and at last, in time, overcame his agitation; but never again did his eyes meet hers, or were they even ever raised towards her. He had brought into the room with him some greyhounds, apparently as subjects for conversation. They fawned and jumped on their master; and the noise and bustle they made—the feeding them, and Emmeline's endeavours to ingratiate herself in their favour, was a something to do, and a relief.

During that melancholy breakfast, of which neither eat, Emmeline was the one who played her part the best. When it was gone, Fitzhenry said, "I have some letters I must write"—and, struck with the possible interpretation of his own words, he coloured deeply; "but they will soon be written," he added hastily, "and probably you too will wish to write to tell your mother of your safe arrival; and,"—again embarrassed, he stopped short. However, in a minute,

he recovered himself, and said, " The post leaves this place at one; after that, if the day continues fine, you will perhaps like to go out and see the place. I don't know what sort of a horsewoman you may be, but I have a very docile animal, if you will venture to mount him."

Emmeline, who had ridden much, and thought that species of exercise, with a groom attending, would, under their awkward circumstances, be better than a *tête-à-tête* walk, directly said she had no fears, and would prefer riding.

Thus they parted; and Emmeline went to her own room to write to her parents. It was then that the melancholy of her prospects overcame her with a bitterness she had not before experienced.

She had taken her pen in her hand—placed the blank paper before her; but the moment she was going to address her mother, an involuntary burst of tears escaped from her, and she laid her head down on the table, unable to write; for, alas! what could she write to that doating mother? what feelings express, but those of mortification, and the anticipation, the conviction, indeed, of certain future unhappiness to them as well as to herself? Perhaps equally, if not more poignant, would be the feelings of many women, were they but a few years after their fate in life is thus fixed, to re-peruse the letters written during the early period of their marriage, breathing nothing but the belief of continued felicity and of unalterable love. But no such even transient dream of bliss existed to poor Emmeline. Again she took her pen, wiped away the tears that had blotted her paper, and, as well as she she could, made out a letter to satisfy her mother's anxious heart.

There was no lover at her side, fondly to follow each motion of her hand, each thought that her pen traced, and with the playfulness of overflowing love and happiness, to guide that hand when, for the first time, signing his name as her own.

When the hour fixed on for their ride arrived, Emmeline went to the appointment with as cheerful a countenance as she could command. Fitzhenry left it to the groom to put her on her horse, and never looked at her when mounted; but, otherwise, was careful of her safety; and this cold neglect on his part she at the minute rejoiced at, as she had feared he must have observed the trace of her tears. The fresh air and a new and agreeable country revived her spirits, by nature at all times inclined to cheerfulness. The awkwardness and mental absence of her companion also a little wore off, and, on the whole, they got through the morning better than she had expected.

Fitzhenry told Emmeline that his father was coming to them the Wednesday following, and that he had invited some friends for the end of the week. She rejoiced to hear of these arrangements; not but that her feelings towards that father had much changed since the truth had begun to break in upon her; but then, any third person would be such a relief!

When she thought of the way in which their honeymoon was to be passed—that after hurrying away from town and the world with all accustomed bustle—and, although only married four-and-twenty hours, they both already looked to society for relief, the absurdity of their situation struck her for an instant as so ridiculous, that involuntarily a smile, which she saw did not escape her companion, stole over her features; but, as it faded, a deep-drawn sigh succeeded, and she averted her head, to conceal from Fitzhenry, the revolution of feeling which she was conscious was painted in her face. A long train of reflections passed through her mind, as, absorbed in thought, she carelessly with her whip brushed from the bushes, as she passed them, the drops remaining from a late shower; and so deep was her reverie (the first almost in which poor Emmeline had ever been lost), that Lord Fitzhenry twice spoke to her before she heard him, and when

she did, the tone of her voice, in answer, had in it (perhaps unknown to herself) a something of repulsive coldness, unusual to her. Whether it so struck him or not, cannot be ascertained; but the remainder of their ride was performed nearly in total silence.

Emmeline at once wisely took to her own occupations, and allowed her husband to go his own way. It would be often wise and prudent if even new-married *lovers* did the same; for, shocked as they may be at the idea, even real love will at last become dull and wearisome; and many a fondly devoted bride has, probably, during the very first week, often wished for her usual occupations, as much as her lover has for his gun and pointers. But with Lord and Lady Fitzhenry, there was no form, no farce of sentiment to keep up. Each felt happier when apart from the other; and, by having many an hour for reflection, Emmeline was enabled to school her mind to the trials to which she felt she must be exposed —trials but too likely to increase; for gradually her irritated feelings gave way. When Fitzhenry's letter, and its harsh expressions of determined indifference towards her returned to her recollection, then her offended pride enabled her to act her part with spirit; and she could talk, and even laugh, with apparent gaiety, to show him he had not had power to wound her feelings deeply. For, amiable as was Emmeline's disposition, enough of human infirmity lurked about her—enough, of the "Woman scorned," to allow her a degree of pleasure in mortifying one, who had shown so little scruple in more than mortifying her.

At moments, too, her natural gaiety was not to be restrained; and when, on the third evening of their residence at Arlingford, her laughing eye caught the look of astonishment in the old butler's countenance, when, as he entered the room, he found the supposed lovers occupied with their books at opposite ends of the apartment, apparently as unconscious

of each other's presence as any indifferent pair after a dozen years marriage,—she could not command the inclination to laughter that overcame her.

Lord Fitzhenry looked astonished.

"I am much diverted with what I am reading," said Emmeline, to account for her sudden burst of mirth (colouring at the same time, with the consciousness of her departure from truth), although perhaps not sorry of an opportunity of showing him, that even in *his* society, when so totally neglected by him, and after all he had said and done to depress her spirits, she was still disposed to cheerfulness.

"May I ask what book you are reading, that I may benefit also by the entertainment," replied her husband.

"Perhaps you would not be equally amused by it," said she. "Sometimes little things tickle our fancy, without our being able to say why; and much depends on the humour we are in."

Lord Fitzhenry looked a little disconcerted, and Emmeline could not be so generous as to regret it.

But in his society, she soon ceased to show either spirit or triumph; soon forgot to be angry. The mildness of his manners, the charm of his conversation, when sometimes for a little he seemed to forget their peculiar situation, and to give way to his natural habits and disposition, soon won upon Emmeline, and, with a sigh, she thought, "How she *could* have loved him!" When galloping on before her, and when certain she should not be observed, her eyes were fixed on his manly, graceful figure, and she admired the ease, and indescribable *elegance* (if one may use a word so degraded) of all his actions.

There is something in the manners and conversation of an intelligent man of the world, which it is impossible adequately to describe,—which, without being either information or wit, pleases more than either. It is, perhaps, the art of giving to each subject no more than its due proportion of time

and thought, which prevents conversation from becoming tedious, and hinders any idea, however serious, from weighing too heavily on the mind. Fitzhenry possessed this art in a superlative degree; and Emmeline, to whom such conversation was almost totally new, and who by nature was formed to appreciate every refinement, was powerfully captivated by it. And, added to this, there was a certain foreign gallantry of manner (that among her father's acquaintance she had certainly never experienced), and a habit of attention to women, which, in Fitzhenry, was so strong, that his behaviour, even to Emmeline, partook of it—to her, whom he never looked at, nor apparently noticed.

The whole plan of his present life, the footing upon which he meant Lady Fitzhenry and himself to live together, was, perhaps, of foreign growth. A true-bred Englishman would never have behaved with the civility of good breeding to a wife so forced upon him. He could never have thought it possible to have established any one in his house on the terms on which Emmeline was to be placed. But although Lord Fitzhenry looked upon the observance of English customs in a total retirement after marriage as particularly irksome, it never could make him wanting in respect, and even in kindness, to one of Emmeline's sex. His will once made known, —told, as it had been, very plainly and decidedly,—there was nothing more to settle between them, and he behaved to her with that sort of general observance and attention due from a man to a woman.

In short, he could not help being agreeable, although differing so cruelly from the animated, enthusiastic Fitzhenry, known to his friends.

Perhaps such conduct was more calculated to excite despair than even apparent dislike would have been to one, who, like Emmeline, aimed at winning his love; but, quick as she was, her inexperience prevented her from being aware, that these attentions of civility were paid by him from mere force of

habit; she therefore gave way to the charm which daily captivated her, and did not always suspect that those words on which her ear delighted to hang, and which sometimes even wore the semblance of gallantry, were uttered by him generally in total absence of mind, with his thoughts fixed on another.

Who that other was, Emmeline no longer doubted. Something she recollected having heard of Lord Fitzhenry's admiration for Lady Florence Mostyn, when abroad; but he had then been so long out of England, Emmeline's thoughts were little occupied about him, and the intelligence had made but slight impression on her young mind. Now, putting various circumstances together, she could no longer doubt that Lady Florence was her favoured rival, if indeed a rival she could be called, where there was no competition.

For, much as Emmeline might wish to propitiate her husband, and though even a little vanity and pique might enter into the feeling, yet she had no idea of any of the arts of coquetry; and if she now exerted all her powers of agreeableness, it was from the simple wish to make their present melancholy life pass as well as the awkward circumstances in which they were placed allowed. If she might hope *in time* to *win* her companion's *affections*, she gave up, as perfectly hopeless, all attempts to *captivate* his imagination. And that very feeling made her more at ease, and therefore more agreeable than she could otherwise have been. On all general subjects, Fitzhenry was more than willing to converse. The publications of the day opened a wide field for discussion. It was neutral ground, on which they could meet and parley. There was a peculiar liveliness, and originality in all he said, which Emmeline was not only able to appreciate, but, by taking up his ideas with quickness, to encourage fresh remarks, and even improve upon them. The merits of Sir Walter Scott, Miss Edgeworth, and Southey, were all thoroughly com-

mented upon. Lord Byron came too near home, and, as if by mutual consent, they always avoided him and his writings.

One evening—the last they now had to pass alone—Emmeline had somehow wandered in her conversation to Italy; but she immediately observed a cloud of recollections darken her husband's brow, and, making rather an awkward retreat, she resumed the book she was reading, and which had given rise to her unlucky remark; and never took her eyes from it till the usual time for retiring to her own room. Fitzhenry had also remained silent; but the moment she moved, he started up as if roused from a reverie, lit her candle for her, and wished her good night, hoping the slight headache she had complained of would be better next day. The tone of his voice was so agreeable, the expression of his countenance so mild, that she felt with Juliet,

"Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I could say good night till it be morrow."

When she reached her own room, unconscious of what she did, she leant her head on her hand, and stood thus for some time at the chimney-piece, on which she had placed her candle, lost in thought. Had she been asked what those thoughts were, perhaps she could not have defined them; but at length, a deep sigh escaped her as she ejaculated to herself. "How pleasant he is! and if so to me, whom he dislikes, despises, what must he be to her, to whom his whole mind and heart are laid open? With me it is almost impossible to avoid forbidden subjects—Italy, I see, I must never touch upon. Not only the present but the past belongs to Lady Florence; I am only connected with the future in his mind, and a future to which he looks with dislike and dread."

The next day was that on which they expected Lord Arlingford; and Emmeline, when she met her husband at break-

fast, was concerned to see that all those miserable, agitated feelings, which had apparently much subsided, had now returned worse than ever. During that meal, he was so hurried, so abstracted, that when, after it was over, he had placed himself at the window to read the newspaper, she ventured to go up to him, and purposely said something about his father's arrival, hoping that she might dispel the anxiety which seemed to oppress him, by showing him how little Lord Arlingford's presence would add to her awkward feelings. She therefore, to open the subject, asked at what time he thought he would arrive.

Fitzhenry, without taking his eyes off the paper, said he did not expect him till dinner-time—there was a pause, Emmeline not knowing well how again to begin—at length, Fitzhenry himself broke the silence by saying, "Had you not better write to Mr. and Mrs. Benson, and propose their making us a visit here soon? You will probably be anxious to meet them before long."

"Thank you very much," exclaimed Emmeline, quite moved by the kindness of his proposal, and feeling as if she could have seized with affection on the hand that rested on the edge of the window near her. For a minute, the temptation was strong; her breath came quick, and the blood rushed into her cheeks. But those cruel words in Fitzhenry's letter, "my affections can never be yours," flashed like lightning across her mind, and prevented her from forgetting herself. Still lost in thought, there she stood. It seemed as if he felt the awkwardness of the moment, and made a motion to go. "Perhaps then you will give me a frank for my father," she said timidly, and wishing to detain him.

"Certainly, with pleasure;" and he sat down to the table to write it. As he gave it her, his hand trembled. Again Emmeline's better judgment failed her—again her feelings, unused to concealment, got the better of her prudence. Sorry to observe his excessive perturbation, and wishing as far as

she could, to alleviate it, while taking the frank from his hand, and without raising her eyes from the writing, she said in a tremulous voice, "Don't distress yourself—indeed you may trust me." Alas! these words had the direct contrary effect from what she had meant and hoped. Fitzhenry started up, and hurried out of the room.

"What have I done!" thought poor Emmeline, as the door closed upon him. "I have forgotten my promise, broken my word—I have displeased him!" and she sank on the chair he had quitted. She hoped he would return; but he did not come. She then thought she would write to him, but, fortunately, nothing which she could express, satisfied her feelings; and, at length, she resolved that she would rather try and make him forget one unguarded word, by never referring to it, and never again so offending.

Sadly she retired to her own sitting room, and saw no more of Fitzhenry, till, at their usual hour for riding, a servant came and told her the horses were ready, and that my lord was at the door waiting for her. Emmeline hurried down stairs. She dared not even look at her husband, for the wish to please had begun already to make her timid; but, by the tone of his voice, she soon judged that all *anger* at least, if ever entertained against her, was gone. He even exerted himself more than usual to talk on indifferent subjects.

Lord Arlingford arrived to dinner—Emmeline met him with the cordiality of a daughter. He seemed in high spirits, delighted with her, with the improvements in the house, with every thing. Many a time did the blood rush into Emmeline's cheek at the allusions he made to their late marriage, his railleries on the honey-moon, and such common hackneyed subjects, which, trifling as they are, generally possess a power of pleasing where happiness really exists, but which to her and Lord Fitzhenry were torture. She turned all this off as well as she could; sometimes almost hating herself for having already become so artful. They

thus got to the end of the first day of Lord Arlingford's visit better than she had expected. The father and son had much to look at, much to talk over about the place, plantations, &c. and after the first two days, their party was enlarged by some young men, friends of Fitzhenry.

Emmeline now found her task comparatively easy; she was of course the object of much attention with all her new guests; all were anxious to please her, and to court her acquaintance, as Lord Fitzhenry's wife; all, too, seemed surprised at finding Emmeline Benson, the banker's daughter, the agreeable, intelligent, and perfectly well-bred person which, in truth, she was.

At first, timidity made her feel embarrassed in her new situation; but that soon wore off, and, naturally gay, her spirits rose with the gaiety and lively conversation of those around her. She could not be indifferent to the flattering attentions paid her; and, to her own surprise, Emmeline soon found herself at ease, and happy. For Emmeline's heart was as yet comparatively free; an all-engrossing passion had not *yet* destroyed its happy tranquillity, and a gay, joyous laugh often showed the innocent lightness of that heart. Once, from the other end of the dinner-table, she found Lord Fitzhenry's eyes fixed upon her, but whether it was surprise at the part she was able to take in conversation, or displeasure, perhaps even disgust, at the gaiety which had thus attracted his attention towards her, she knew not. But that look—although his eyes were immediately withdrawn on meeting hers—had power instantly to check her mirth; and her neighbour scarcely recognised in the absent, silent person that now sat beside him, the gay companion, who, a few minutes before, entered so readily into all his ideas.

Emmeline now, nearly for the first time, heard herself called by her new name. Her husband, too, forced sometimes to designate and address her, called her "Lady Fitzhenry." To hear oneself spoken to by a name so dear, that

formerly one hardly dared pronounce it—to be thus reminded, each time, that we are indissolubly bound to that being we adore, is delightful. But in *her* husband's mouth it was to poor Emmeline an insult. It only seemed to cast her further from him, and remind her of the distant footing of mere form on which they lived, on which they were ever to live; for "Emmeline," the name which when a child she had so often heard him pronounce, when she cared not for the endearing intimacy of the appellation, now never passed his lips.

She now saw him but little, and never alone; for he never came into her own sitting-room, and seldom into the drawing-room, except at those hours, when he was certain of finding some of the rest of the party there also. She felt that since they had had society in the house, she had rather lost than gained ground with him, and she now regretted the week they had spent tête-à-tête, much as she had wished it over at the time, as *then* they were *compelled* to have some sort of intercourse together.

Gradually, Emmeline's abstraction increased, and her spirits changed; for, almost unconscious to herself, when in Fitzhenry's society, her thoughts and attention were entirely occupied by him. The most flattering compliments that gallantry could suggest, had sometimes to be twice repeated to her, and were at last received with a vacant smile; for if she caught the distant tone of Fitzhenry's voice, she heard nothing else; and if, during the day, he had more than usually spoken to her, or paid her some attention of mere civility, her spirits rose even beyond their natural level, and thus gave to her manner at times an appearance of caprice far from her nature.

## CHAPTER IV.

" Unhappy Psyche! soon the latent wound
The fading roses of her cheek confess,
Her eyes bright beams in swimming sorrows drown'd,
Sparkle no more with life and happiness,
Her parents' fond exulting heart to bless."

It was now about six weeks since the fatal day on which Lord and Lady Fitzhenry were married. His feelings towards her, to all appearance, remained the same; but, with Emmeline, the happiness which depends on insensibility was gone.

Business had hitherto always prevented Mr. and Mrs. Benson from accepting the invitation to Arlingford Hall; but their visit was now fixed to take place as soon as the present company in the house were gone. Emmeline respected her father, and dearly loved her mother; but still she had by nature so nice a tact, that she was soon aware that herself, as well as Lord Fitzhenry, would be better pleased that they should not fall into a set and style of society which they could not suit, and which would not suit them.

Emmeline rather dreaded her mother's visit, dreaded the quick eye of tender affection, and the gossip of servants. "But," thought she, "this visit once over, I have nothing more to fear; all will then go on smoothly—smoothly and sadly to me," she added. "But I will hope a time may come when he will care for me—already I think he is used to my society; at least, he does not *dislike* it, for I am no longer a constraint to him—I must be patient." And with a deep-drawn sigh, she turned over the leaves of her as yet unopened music-books, and sat down to practise some of her father's favourite songs, which since her marriage she had neglected;

for Fitzhenry had never asked her to play or sing, and, unsolicited, she had not had sufficient courage. Since Lord Arlingford had been with them they had dined late, and cards and conversation had filled up the evenings.

At length, the day came on which Mr. and Mrs. Benson were expected. Emmeline's heart beat quick the whole of it, and her eye was on the road which led to the house, her ear watching for every sound all the morning, although it was impossible they could arrive till late in the day. Fitzhenry sent his horses to meet them at the last stage, watched for their arrival, was at the door of the house to receive them, helped them out of the carriage, and himself conducted them up to Emmeline's room. There, for a few minutes, he left them to fold to their hearts their beloved child. For it was not a scene that he wished to witness, or in which he felt, circumstanced as they were, he had any part to play.

Emmeline's feelings were worked up to the utmost. Joy, fear, a thousand confused ideas conspired to weaken her nerves, and she fell quite overcome into her mother's arms. It was some time before she could compose herself. But agitation at that moment was so natural, that it seemed to cause no astonishment, nor raise any suspicions.

"My own dear Emmeline!" exclaimed Mrs. Benson, as she kissed her again and again, "how happy I am to see you once more, and to see you, as I trust I do, every way so happy;" and she looked round with complacency on the refined comfort of her room.

Emmeline pressed her mother's hand, she could not speak, and with difficulty forced a smile.

"And how well my lord looks," said her father: "the last time I saw him, on your wedding-day you know, Emmy—Lady Fitzhenry, I mean; beg your ladyship's pardon," said he, chuckling, while making her a formal bow in order to pass off for wit, what was in fact the real overflowings of his vanity at her newly-acquired rank:—"on that day, the nine-

teenth of August, eighteen hundred and twenty-three, I did not like his looks at all. I really was afraid he was not well; but I was told it was *natural agitation.* Now I can't for my life conceive why a man is to look red and yellow and melancholy on the happiest day of his life. I dare say I did not when I was married to my good woman there—Eh, Mrs. B.? —However, now a wholesome country life, and true domestic English happiness, you know, my Lady Fitzhenry, seem to have made quite another man of him."

Emmeline tried again to smile.

"It was so good of him," continued Mr. Benson, "to press us so often to come—but it was impossible sooner; business must be attended to—my old saying, you know;—and then the kindness of sending his horses for us, although I dare say there were plenty to be had at the inn; but still your old father liked very much to be brought to Arlingford Hall in a manner in triumph, driven by two postilions in the handsome old Fitzhenry livery, with the coachman on before to show the way, although I suppose the drivers knew it quite well; but it did not signify, I liked all that, egad I did—and I am not ashamed to own it. And then, thought I, a man so full of pretty attentions to his father-in-law, must make a good husband to my dear girl."

Luckily a kiss of rapture, which he then imprinted on that girl's face, saved the necessity of a reply.

By this time, Fitzhenry again made his appearance, apologizing for his absence under the plea of having had some orders to give his coachman.

"No apology, my lord," said the excellent old citizen, seizing his hand, which he heartily shook; "I consider myself at home here; you and Emmeline are one, you know, and it would be hard indeed if I did not feel at home in my daughter's house."

Fitzhenry endeavoured to say something in return, but failed, and, as a retreat from observation, walked to the window.

"She is a dear, good little girl, this daughter of mine—is she not, my lord?" continued Mr. Benson, patting Emmeline's cheek; "and happiness, and your good care of her, have given her such a colour, that I declare I think you must have already taught her to wear rouge, as your fine ladies do." And Mr. Benson laughed heartily, in gaiety of heart, at his own wit. Alas! poor Emmeline's colour was the flushed crimson of nervous agitation. Again Fitzhenry had recourse to looking out of the window at the horses and carriages, which luckily had not yet driven off.

"Ay, they are beautiful animals," said Mr. Benson, following him; "bred here, I believe; and then they are so well matched. I have been admiring them all the way. Do you ever drive them yourself? though *now* I suppose Emmeline has taken the reins into her own hands—Eh, Lady Fitzhenry?"

"This will never do," thought Emmeline; her heart sank within her, and to put an end to the present trying moment, she proposed showing her mother her room: she trusted that her father's exuberant spirits would before long vent themselves, and at any rate, separately, both she and Fitzhenry could better bear such attacks. So leaving her father and husband together, she went out of the room with Mrs. Benson. The house—her apartment—the view from the windows—the attentions of the old house-keeper who, in a rustling silk gown, came to make her reverence and offer her services, all delighted the latter. They had much to talk of, aunts, uncles, cousins to enquire after, and Emmeline's spirits became more composed.

At length, it was time to dress for dinner, and Emmeline retired to her own room. But when there, alone, her head sank on her hand; and a shiver of unhappiness (I write only to those who have *hearts*, and to all such these sensations are but too well known)—the cold deserted shiver of unhappiness crept over her frame—"Oh! mine is a hard fate!"

thought she, "to have eternally a part to act, a secret to conceal, with one, for one, whose heart is for ever closed to me."

The sight of her father and mother had revived all the affections and associations of Emmeline's early youth; and, disappointed in all her dreams of happiness, the mad, the desperate thought of confessing her real situation, of leaving Fitzhenry and Arlingford for ever, and returning to her parents, crossed her mind. But a feeling which every day was gaining ground in her heart, almost unknown to herself, made her, the next minute, start with horror at the thought; and, almost terrified at the idea of the irretrievable step which in a moment of hopeless depression she might have been tempted to take, she resolved that she would keep her word with her husband, conceal and bear all, and trust to time and heaven.

Emmeline cooled her burning eyelids, rang for her maid, and dressed for dinner. Fitzhenry was perfect in his manner and attentions to Mr. and Mrs. Benson. He seemed instinctively to know how to please the former; sent for the oldest wine out of the cellar for him, filled his snuff-box on purpose, bore with his bad jokes, adapted his conversation to him, asking him questions—the replies to which perhaps he never listened to—but which gave the appearance of seeking information from him; and, in the gratitude of her heart for all this kindness, when she ventured to raise her eyes on her husband's handsome manly countenance, smiling in good-nature on her parents, Emmeline wondered how the idea of leaving him, betraying him, ever could have entered her mind; and she thought that to live with so amiable a being, on any terms, would be happiness.

As soon as the servants had left the dining-room, Mr. Benson filled his glass to a bumper. Emmeline, who observed the smile on his face as he deliberately poured in the wine, dreaded what was coming. "I am an old fashioned old man," said Mr. Benson, "and I love all old customs; so I must beg

leave to propose a toast—My Lord and Lady Fitzhenry, said he, bowing to them exultingly, "and may they, and may I, see many happy returns of the nineteenth of August."

Emmeline coloured, and fixed her eyes on the table before her.

"This is the happiest day of my life, I believe," continued Mr. Benson, "not even excepting my own wedding-day; my heart had been so long set on seeing my Emmy happily settled as your wife; and I must congratulate myself, as well as you, my Lord, at its having at last come to pass. For you too have had it long in your head, or I am much mistaken," added Mr. Benson, nodding significantly to Lord Fitzhenry. "Well do I remember, when Emmy was not above so high, your calling her your little wife, and saying you had a right to kiss her, when you took leave of us, on going abroad. I warrant you have not forgot that any more than myself."

And in the exuberance of his joy, he again held out his hand to his son-in-law. Emmeline dared not look up to see how her husband stood this trial; her heart beat so violently that she felt as if its pulsations must be heard during the dead silence, which for an instant followed Mr. Benson's speech.

Lord Fitzhenry was the first to break it; and, hastily drinking off his glass, as he bowed in return to Mr. Benson, "You will find this wine very good, I think," said he; "it is some which a friend of mine brought me from Madeira, and has never been in a wine-merchant's hands."

"Yes, indeed, most excellent," replied Mr. Benson, "and I hope by this time next year I may drink some of it, to the health of a little heir to the family."

On poor Emmeline's cheek, a deadly paleness so rapidly succeeded the deep crimson of a minute before, that it caught even Mr. Benson's eye, who, although not quick at observing such dumb indications of feeling, was sorry to have distressed her, though he hardly guessed how he had done so. His spirits were elevated by the exultation of the moment, and

the "excellent wine," beyond his usual hilarity—and even beyond his control.

"Come, come, Emmy," said he, smiling on her—"I meant no offence; but you know such things often, indeed I may say commonly do happen, as people having little boys and little girls after they are married; and I hope you may have a little boy some of those days, that's all;" and he winked his eye facetiously at Lord Fitzhenry.

The latter however was, as well as Emmeline, examining the pattern of the China-plate before him; so that poor Mr. Benson meeting with no encouragement from any one, was forced to change the subject of conversation, and Emmeline soon proposed to her mother to leave the dining-room.

Mrs. Benson took no notice of what had passed; and Emmeline gradually recovered herself, although, on the gentlemen joining them, she found it impossible to encounter her husband's eyes, and, hastily getting up, she went to the pianoforte. At first, her hand trembled, but a feeling of pride steadied it; and on her father asking for one of his old favourite songs, she complied.

Fitzhenry gradually approached her, and when she had finished singing—"That is very beautiful," said he, "You have never before indulged me with any music."

"No!" replied Mr. Benson, "that is a great shame, when I paid I don't know what to a Signor——what do you call him? for teaching her. She can sing you any of your fine bravuras; but a plain English song, for my money; it is worth all your Italian airs, for there is some sense, some meaning in that; but, as for your foreign nonsense, one can't understand what the words are about; no one can make head or tail of them."

Emmeline could not help smiling; and, looking up, her eyes met Fitzhenry's. He too smiled, and smiled so kindly on her that, for an instant, she fancied there was affection, even fondness, in their expression.

"Perhaps," said he, "you will nevertheless indulge me with one of the unmeaning songs Mr. Benson complains of."

Emmeline sang one of Rossini's. Fitzhenry sat down by the pianoforte opposite to her, his head leaning on his hand; and, at first, he looked attentively at her, but when the song was over, he seemed so lost in thought as to have totally forgot the singer. He said nothing; suffered her to leave the instrument without making any attempt at detaining her, and soon after left the room.

On his return, he proposed a game at whist; Emmeline had early learnt it, to make up her father's party, so a card-table was rung for. Of course, Mr. and Mrs. Benson were to play together, and many cruel things were said about not parting husband and wife, &c. But Fitzhenry's behaviour that evening had been to Emmeline (in spite of his disregard of the song he had asked for) an additional draft of love, and she bore all most bravely, for she felt it was for him she was bearing it; she did not venture to observe him while all this was passing, but, by the tone of his voice, he seemed to endure these trials with patience and unruffled temper.

Mr. Benson and his wife won every game, for their adversaries knew little of what was going on, trumping and taking each other's tricks with the most perfect mutual indifference. But Mr. Benson only exulted in his superior play, as chuckling, he put his daughter's money into his pocket, and he retired to bed in high good humour.

The next morning, after breakfast, Fitzhenry took Mr. Benson to show him the farm, stables, &c. and Emmeline and her mother were left together. Mrs. Benson for some time fidgetted about the room, giving dry laconic answers to all Emmeline's observations, which she knew well was a symptom of her working herself up to say something unusual, and she dreaded what it might be. At length, Mrs. Benson came up to her daughter, and folding her to her heart, as she printed a fond kiss on her forehead, "Well, my dear child,"

she said, "I trust I see you as happy as heart—as even my foolish heart can wish?"

"How can you doubt it?" answered Emmeline, greatly embarrassed by so direct a question. "You see how kind, how excellent he is"—and to avoid her mother's anxious gaze, she stooped down to caress an old poodle of Fitzhenry's that lately established himself in her room. "Speak, Tiber," said she to the dog—"Have we not a most kind master?"

There was a pause, but Mrs. Benson returned to the charge.

"I find you live quite *fashionably*, in separate apartments. I must say I think that is a silly new fangled refinement which I don't approve of at all, and I hope it is no fancy of yours?"

Emmeline coloured deeply.—"Lord Fitzhenry," she replied, "had so long lived abroad, was so used to foreign customs, that she did not wonder he liked to adopt them at home."

"But, Lord Fitzhenry was not a married man abroad, I presume?" said Mrs. Benson, forcing a laugh.

Emmeline forced one too, but her lip quivered, tears came into her eyes, and again she was obliged to stoop and coax the dog.

"By the bye, Emmeline," said Mrs. Benson, after a moment's silence, "I have brought you your work-box which you left in Harley-street; I wonder you did not miss it, for I suppose you have a good deal of time to yourself now, and are more alone than you used to be with us?"

"All women must be a good deal alone when they leave home," replied Emmeline, with as steady a voice as she could command,—"for the occupations and amusements of men are so different, particularly in the country."

"Then you *are* chiefly by yourself," said Mrs. Benson, hastily, as if catching at the confession, as something she was seeking for.

"Oh dear no, I go out riding with some of the gentlemen nearly every day."

"Oh, you do, do you?" said Mrs. Benson, "and Lord Fitzhenry, does he go too?"

"Yes, generally."

"I thought he had not," said Mrs. Benson rather vacantly, and appearing to be engaged in some ruminations of her own.

Emmeline took advantage of the momentary pause that followed, to start a new subject of conversation. She trusted, that when her mother saw how perfectly good humoured and indulgent Lord Fitzhenry was to her, in all things allowing her to be her own mistress, as well as mistress of his house, that the doubts and suspicions which she saw had been raised iu her mind, either by her own observations, or her maid's gossipping reports, would subside. For, as Emmeline suspected, this conversation had, in fact, been brought on by some stories which Mrs. Benson had already heard. Her maid and Emmeline's were old acquaintance; and what maid or mistress can help talking over her neighbour's affairs? The truth was, that Mrs. Brown, the old housekeeper, and Susan, Emmeline's maid (now promoted to Mrs. Jenkins), had already quarreled; for the latter soon began to throw out hints, which Mrs. Brown, thinking herself bound to stand up for her master, resented violently; so that by the time Mrs. Benson arrived, Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Brown were open enemies; and the former lost no time in securing on her side her old companion Warren—Mrs. Benson's maid.

As soon, therefore, as they had swallowed their tea, at which solemn and important ceremony Mrs. Brown had presided in all the pomp of housekeeper civility, the two friends retired; and while Mrs. Benson's clothes were arranged in the drawers by the maid, Jenkins, with many a sigh over poor Miss Emmeline, and many an exaggeration, gave an ac-

count of the *dreadful* way in which Lord and Lady Fitzhenry lived together, and of my Lord's shameful neglect of her. "In short," she ended with saying, "things are come to such a pitch, that Mrs. Brown and I are scarce on speaking terms, and I am, as you see, very distant even with Mr. Reynolds. People must see what they does see, except those people who wo'nt see, and I am quite resolved on one thing —which is, to be as uppish as possible both with Mrs. Brown and Mr. Reynolds till I see my lord behave better to my lady. I am but a servant, certainly; but I can't, for all that, help thinking it a very strange thing the way they go on."

"And what does Mrs. Brown say to this?" enquired her auditor.

"Oh she says, forsooth, that it is all my vulgar notions, and because I have not been used to quality."

"Quality, indeed!" echoed her friend. "Fine airs, upon my word. Miss Emmeline was as good as Lord Fitzhenry any day in the year, I am sure. I should like to know who had the most money, and the best of the bargain? Poor thing! she is much changed; and when she said to me, 'How do you do, Warren?' I could plainly see that all was not right between her and Lord Fitzhenry. You know I was always against the match."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Brown, who came to enquire whether any thing was wanted in the rooms.

"Nothing, ma'am, thank you," said Warren dryly, endeavouring to throw into her manner that dignity which Jenkins said she was determined to keep up till Lord Fitzhenry was a better husband, and which Warren, as her sworn ally, thought it right to adopt also. And then pretending to be busily occupied, she took no notice of Mrs. Brown. Warren's behaviour was so different from what it had been when they had parted at the tea-table, that the consequential housekeeper guessed directly to whose influence the change was owing.

She said nothing; but settling the shawl that was pinned on her shoulders, and casting an angry glance at Jenkins, she bustled out of the room, saying, she would send the *housemaid* to attend upon them; and resolving to be revenged on the two friends.

"You have affronted Mrs. Brown finely," said Jenkins, as soon as she had, with somewhat of a jirk, closed the door after her; "but I am glad of it, for really that is the only way to mend matters, and I feel it my duty to my lady, to quarrel in a manner with Mrs. Brown; though, as far as I am myself concerned, I am, as you know, the most good naturedest of people, and willing to live in peace and harmony with every one."

"That you are," replied Mrs. Warren; for, at that moment, she thought it good policy to forget, as well as Mrs. Jenkins did, the many regular pitched battles they had fought, when the latter was simple Susan, and nominally under Warren's controul.

The result of this conversation was a mysterious and sorrowful expression on Warren's countenance when she attended her lady, Mrs. Benson, at bed-time; and a significantly melancholy tone of voice when she said, "I hope you find Lady Fitzhenry pretty well, ma'am?"

"Quite well," said Mrs. Benson. "She has not been ill that I know of. Susan does not say she has been unwell, does she?"

"Oh no; Mrs. Jenkins says her ladyship's health is wonderfully good, considering," replied Warren.

"Considering *what?*" said Mrs. Benson, turning quickly round and looking her in the face, "What do you mean by *considering?*"

"*I* mean? dear me, how should *I* mean any thing?"

"Why, you speak as if you *did* mean something; and I desire if you know any thing about Emmeline's health, that you will tell me."

"La ma'am! there is nothing the matter with Miss Emmeline as I know of, only I thought perhaps she might not be so lively-like as she used to be, living so much alone."

"What do you mean by alone? I suppose Lord and Lady Fitzhenry are as much together as other married people are? I don't expect he sits all day at home with her, any more than Mr. Benson does with me."

"I believe you will find it is very different from you and my master," said Warren, with a significant sigh.

"What *can* you mean by all this?" said Mrs. Benson, alarmed.

"Why, I mean, ma'am, that Miss Emmeline (Lady Fitzhenry, that is to say), is always alone."

"Always alone?" repeated Mrs. Benson; "really Warren, I don't know what you would be at— and I don't believe *you* know yourself."

"Yes, ma'am," said Warren, bridling up; "and I only say what I know to be true. Lord Fitzhenry sleeps in his own room alone all night, and Lady Fitzhenry sits in her room alone all day; and, if that is living like a married pair, I don't know what a married pair is."

"Who tells you all this nonsense?" said Mrs. Benson, angrily, and yet wishing to hear more.

"Why, Mrs. Jenkins, to be sure, ma'am. She says, that my lord quarrelled with my lady on their very wedding-day —for that she herself heard high words between them, and doors shut in a passion-like—and ever since that terrible scene—which Jenkins can swear to—they have continued to live in this strange way. For my part, I don't think if I was Mrs. Jenkins I would remain in so unpleasant a family, although to be sure all is in very high style, and the housekeeper's room as good as many ladies' drawing-rooms, with a nice Turkey carpet; but still all can't be right. However, I should be sorry to tell tales and make mischief; but you know, ma'am, you force me to speak, otherwise I am sure I should

have held my tongue about it all to my dying day, for I am sure I would not for all the world make you uneasy, ma'am."

"Well, I desire you will hold your tongue to every body else," said Mrs. Benson gravely, "and bid Susan come to me to-morrow morning."

Susan told her story, heightening the picture as much as she could; and, after all this, it will not be wondered at that Mrs. Benson endeavoured to discover the truth from Emmeline. Her answers, her praises of Fitzhenry, staggered her; and as Emmeline had anticipated, the appearance of perfect good humour on the part of her husband, often even of gallant attention towards her, made Mrs. Benson think the whole was no more than the common gossip of servants; and, at any rate, she had too much good sense to endeavour to pry into matrimonial secrets and arrangements, which her daughter did not seem to wish to have noticed; so, resolving to be very watchful, she said no more.

A day or two after, several of the neighbours, who had been invited, came to Arlingford. Mr. and Mrs. Benson were of course delighted on seeing the deference and court paid to their daughter; and the bustle occasioned by the visitors, the driving about in the morning, viewing the country, and returning visits occupied Mrs. Benson's time, if not her thoughts, so entirely, that she and Emmeline, being seldom alone together, the latter was spared any more distressing conversations.

At the end of about a week, Mr. Benson received letters which obliged him to return immediately to town on some mercantile business. "But," said he, casting a doubtful, enquiring look on Lord Fitzhenry, "I need not carry off my good lady wife, if you will give her house-room a little longer, and I can perhaps return for her; or, at any rate, I think I may by this time trust her to travel alone, whatever other husbands may"—winking his eye at Emmeline.

Lord Fitzhenry directly expressed great pleasure in Mrs. Benson prolonging her visit, and then, after a moment's pause, added, "Indeed it will be particularly kind to Lady Fitzhenry if she will, for I myself shall be obliged to leave home in a day or two."

Emmeline gave a start, and involuntarily looked up towards her husband. For an instant their eyes met; but as if by mutual consent, both were instantly withdrawn. "He catches at the first opportunity to leave me," thought she. "Glad his penance is over."

Whither he was going, Fitzhenry never said, and Emmeline dared not ask; indeed, she hardly knew whether, during his absence, he would expect her to write to him; and therefore, if even under that pretext she could venture to enquire.

On the day settled for his departure, when the carriage was ready at the door, he came into the drawing-room to take leave. Mrs. Benson was there with Emmeline.

"If there come any letters for me," said he, "I have desired Reynolds to send them to the house in town, and I shall leave word there to have them forwarded." Still he said nothing about her writing to him. He staid some time in the room, seemingly uncertain what to do or say, or how to take leave of her. At length, apparently summoning courage for a disagreeable effort, he walked hastily up to Mrs. Benson, shook hands with her, came up to Emmeline and did the same, adding, in rather a low voice, "I shall be glad to hear from you;" and, not waiting for any answer, he hurried out of the room.

It was the first time their hands had ever met since that morning after their marriage, when she had herself offered hers to Fitzhenry in token of forgiveness and goodwill. Since then, now nearly two months past, her sentiments towards him had taken a totally different character; her face blushed crimson; but he, whose slightest touch had thus thrilled to her heart, and had power to raise that blush, almost

before the "eloquent blood" had reached her cheek, was already gone.

From the window she sadly saw him drive off; whither and to whom he was going, she could not doubt.

Several days passed, and she heard nothing from him; at last, a letter, franked Fitzhenry, was put into her hands; she opened it hastily—her heart beating with emotion—but it merely enclosed a printed one from some trades-person in London, applying for her custom. In a fit of vexation, almost of anger, she was nearly throwing the whole into the fire, when some writing on one of the flaps of the cover caught her attention, and she found these words.

"The longer Mrs. Benson can stay with you the better; I believe I shall not be home for a fortnight. Should she not be able to remain, perhaps you had better go and pay your father a visit; and I will let you know when I am likely to be at Arlingford again; but now, and always, do whatever you yourself like best. I hope soon to hear you are well.

"Yours,

"FITZHENRY."

"So you have got a letter from your husband," said Mrs. Benson; "and a fine thick packet. I hope he is well?"

"Quite well," said Emmeline, sadly.

"What news does he give? what has he been about?"

"News?" repeated Emmeline, absently—

"Yes; I mean—what does he say?"

"Say? oh, nothing."

"What! nothing in all that quantity of paper and writing? Lord, child! you are quite in a dream"—and Mrs. Benson took off her spectacles, and her eyes from the newspaper she was reading, and fixed them attentively on her daughter. This roused her from her reverie, and suddenly recollecting herself, she said, "Oh yes, I forget; he says, he can't come

home yet, and we had better go to Charlton to my father till his return."

"Well, I think that will be a very good plan," said Mrs. Benson: "some business, I suppose, detains him."

"I suppose so," echoed Emmeline.

Mrs. Benson still kept her eyes fixed on Emmeline, and both remained for some time in silence and abstraction. Again all her former doubts and suspicions returned to her mind; and when she looked on her absent, dejected daughter, who still sat gazing on the letter in her hand, she almost resolved to speak to her, and force herself into her confidence. But though with little of the outward refinement of the world, Mrs. Benson had great delicacy of feeling, as well as excellent sense: she felt that when she was not called upon to give advice, or to reprehend what was wrong, she had no business to interfere between her daughter and her husband; and indeed, here, what could she say? Emmeline was certainly changed; she was no longer the gay, light-hearted being she used to be, but *apparently* her husband behaved perfectly well to her; at least nothing had ever passed, that Mrs. Benson could have named as a proof of unkindness; and as for Emmeline, she was to him gentleness—acquiescence itself; but still, Mrs. Benson could not help feeling that all was not right, although she could not perhaps have given any positive reason for her suspicions. How she longed to bid her confide to her every feeling, every care of her heart, as in days of yore, when she hushed her young sorrows to rest on her bosom, and kissed away her childish tears! But when a mother resigns her darling child to him who is to be the arbiter of her future destiny, she loses, in a great measure, that dear prerogative of affection. Mrs. Benson, feeling this, wisely forbore; and the next day, without any thing more passing between them on the subject, they set off together for Charlton, where Mr. Benson had, since Lady Fitzhenry's marriage, chiefly resided.

When there, Emmeline wrote to her husband. There is something so private, so sacred, in a letter—we can, in writing, express so much, which, either from shyness, or emotion, we cannot bring ourselves to say by word of mouth, that Emmeline longed to give way to her inclinations, and pour out on the paper her feelings towards him; but she felt that the utterance of one word which could in any way be interpreted into an allusion to her painful situation, would be breaking her agreement; and she merely told him of her journey and her safe arrival; glad of having even such uninteresting subjects to treat of, and that to Fitzhenry! to whom she *could* have written volumes!

In about ten days she got an answer; it had no date (his letters to her never had beyond the post town on the frank). In it, he named the day for his return to Arlingford. Two days previous to it, notwithstanding Mrs. Benson's remonstrances, and her father's railleries, Emmeline would return home. "He might possibly arrive," she thought to herself; "something might bring him back before the day he had fixed upon, and she was resolved on departure."

But, exactly the contrary happened from what she had anticipated; that day passed in anxious but vain expectation; and the next—and the next. At length, on the fourth, Reynolds, with a countenance expressive of the share he had taken in the disappointment, put a letter into her hand, with the well-known, well-beloved signature of Fitzhenry. And it did not, this time, merely enclose a printed petition, but was from himself. He said in it, that the unexpected arrival of his friend Mr. Pelham (the minister at Vienna), had detained him in town, as he had waited till he could accompany him to Arlingford, which he now hoped he should be able to do in a couple of days. Mr. Moore, his former travelling companion, would also come with him, and they would soon be followed by his cousin, Lady Saville, her husband, and sister. Emmeline had just seen Lady Saville, when she had paid a visit

of form to the Benson family, on the match being declared; and on the wedding-day she was present at the ceremony.

## CHAPTER V.

As t'other day my hand he seized,
My blood with thrilling motion flew:
Trembling all o'er, like one ill pleased,
Perhaps I from his hold withdrew.
'T was fear alone—he read me wrong—
Had he retained my hand, ere long
He had felt its pressure too.

GAY.

Two tedious solitary days were still to be passed before Emmeline expected Fitzhenry at Arlingford. Being secure that she had the house all to herself, she felt a strong inclination to go into his room, which she had never yet entered. It would be, she thought, the next best thing to seeing himself. Treading softly, as if fearful he might hear her, she put her hand on the lock—looked round to see if she was observed, and then hastily turned it. The door was locked.

The noise she made brought a house-maid out of an adjoining room.—"The door is locked, my lady: when my lord went away, he desired the housekeeper to keep the key, but I well step to Mrs. Brown and fetch it, if your ladyship wants any thing."

"Oh no, it is of no consequence," said Emmeline, colouring deeply, as if detected in some crime.

Emmeline was the most single-hearted of beings. She had not sufficient presence of mind to think of any excuse for wishing to go into her husband's room; and with a feeling of awkwardness, almost of shame, she returned to her own. Disappointed, and dispirited, she knew not what to turn to; and for

the first time in her life, felt it impossible to occupy herself; the day appeared endless, and her time an insupportable weight. As she wandered about her own room, her eyes fell on a petition she had had from a poor man residing on the estate, whose house and mill had been nearly destroyed by fire. He lived a few miles off, and Emmeline determined to enquire of Reynolds about him, and, glad to have found an object, to ride to his abode in order to see what could be done for the family—rather ashamed of herself for having allowed her mind to be so entirely engrossed by one subject, that she had totally forgotten this petition which she had received while at Charlton.

Emmeline went into the dining-room and summoned Reynolds. In this room hung a picture of Fitzhenry, painted at the time of his leaving school, when a boy about sixteen. It was much less handsome than he now was; his character was not then, as now, marked on his countenance, giving it that look of manly openness, and yet of feeling, for which it was so remarkable; but (as the eyes looking out of the picture seemed to smile on the beholder), it was so agreeable to Emmeline to gaze on it, that, lost in thought, she forgot entirely what brought her there. How long she had remained, she knew not, but on turning round she saw Reynolds in the room quietly waiting her orders.

"Did you ring, my lady," said the old man, with a benevolent smile.

"Oh yes," said Emmeline, rather embarrassed. "But at this moment I have forgotten——."

"Ah, many a time have I forgot myself looking at that picture," answered Reynolds. "It was considered an excellent likeness when it was done; it was just when we left Eton."

"Why, were you there with Lord Fitzhenry?"

"Oh yes! my lady, I have been with my Lord ever since he was seven years old; Lord Arlingford did not like to have

nursery-maids about him, so I had the entire charge of him—went with him to school, to Oxford, and then abroad; so no wonder I love him, I may say as my son. I hope no offence," added he, tears starting into his eyes.

"What, you were abroad with him?" said Emmeline, hastily catching at the word; *why* she did not know, except that it seemed always as if that word contained the history of her husband's life and affections.

"Yes, my lady, I was in Italy and at Vienna with him. I was three years abroad, and then, when he returned again to Italy .... (he paused)—I felt I was too old to begin again; I thought some youuger servant would suit my lord better, and I begged leave to come home; and though certainly it was not my place, yet I tried hard to persuade my lord to come home too; for I own I thought little good would come of living so much out of one's own country—people get a love for rambling, never can settle, and learn bad foreign ways——."

And again he stopped short, as if he feared he might already have said too much. Emmeline longed to hear more, and yet she also thought perhaps she had allowed him to go too far; and making no comment on what he had said, she hastily ejaculated—"Oh! I remember now what I rang for. I want to know where that man of the name of Rawlins now lives, who wrote me this petition, and if you know any thing about him, and what can be done for him."

"Rawlins, whose mill was burnt? Oh yes! my lady, I know him very well, but all that is settled. My lord, to whom he also applied, wrote to me to find him employment, and to give him and his family, for the present, a cottage that chanced to be vacant; and he also desired me to give the wife some allowance weekly till they had a little recovered themselves, and till he could see what more could be done for them, for they are honest industrious people, and my lord is so good. I have his letter somewhere about me, if your

ladyship would like to see it," added Reynolds, searching in a large pocket-book, in which among heaps of bills and papers he at last found it, and gave it to Emmeline.

Her heart overflowed towards her husband. "How good! how kind he is!" thought she, and she almost added, "kind to every one but me."

The letter said nothing more than what Reynolds had repeated; but still, even to see his handwriting was agreeable. She was just going to return it to him, when on the other side of the page, a postcript and her own name caught her eye, and with a beating heart, she continued:—

"I hope you have attended to those alterations in the greenhouse which Lady Fitzhenry wished to have made—and desire the groom to exercise her horse properly for her before her return, for when I last rode him he was much too spirited."

Emmeline read and re-read these few words expressive of care and thought for her, till she exaggerated their meaning far beyond their original import, and on them built many a visionary castle of future happiness. She mounted her horse, and many an additional caress and kind word she addressed to the animal, now that it was connected in her mind with Fitzhenry, and with the first expression of interest about herself that had ever escaped him. She found the Rawlins family overflowing with gratitude, and offering up prayers for her husband, in which it cannot be doubted she most heartily joined.

Buoyed up by all these exhilarating feelings, she had almost forgotten her real situation, and the terms on which she and this beloved Fitzhenry lived; and in these flattering dreams, the two intervening days quickly passed, and that on which she was to expect him at last arrived. The whole of the morning was spent in restless anticipations of happiness, picturing to herself their meeting, fancying what he would say to her, how he would look at her, till she actually heard his carriage drive up to the door. With a beating heart she flew

to the window, and her delighted eye caught the first glance of the face she loved.

His two friends were with him, and all three entered the room together. Emmeline was so overjoyed at seeing him again after a month's separation—(a century in love's calculation of time), that fearful of expressing too much, she remained as if spell-bound in her place. Fitzhenry came up to her, but his manner was, if possible, more cold, more embarrassed than ever. How unlike the meeting that she had indulged herself in acting over and over in her own mind! He introduced his two companions to her. Mr. Pelham had one of those calm but expressive countenances which directly obtains our interest; and when he held out his hand to Emmeline, claiming the friendship of his friend's wife, the interest seemed reciprocal. Indeed, his look of anxious curiosity when presented to her, would have been embarrassing, had not his manner been marked with a peculiar appearance of kindness.

Very different was the impression made on Emmeline by Mr. Moore. Although he looked clever and lively, she shrunk at once from him; the glance of his eye had something penetrating and satirical which she dreaded. With a pure guileless heart, and an unreproving conscience, poor Emmeline could not help fearing a quick observer of feelings in all the little daily occurrences of life.

The rest of the party that Fitzhenry had announced followed the day after. Lady Saville was what might be called agreeable in society, although more from possessing the polish and easy manner of the world, than from any decided talents or accomplishments. At first, she and her sister had, with the true impertinence of fine ladies, settled between them, that Emmeline could only be fit to laugh at; and they anticipated no little amusement in quizzing the banker's daughter. But when they found her, as even they were themselves obliged to allow, quite on a par with themselves, perfect in manners, and in fact possessing the outward good breeding of the

world, although free from that falsehood and selfishness which so often destroys its charm, they changed their tone, and resolved they would patronize her, declaring, "she was quite a person to be brought forward." And they soon found real pleasure in her society and conversation.

Some of the county neighbours, with whom Lady Saville was previously acquainted, joined the party, and the house was quite full. This Emmeline plainly saw was now Fitzhenry's plan of life when forced to be at Arlingford; and she was compelled with a sigh to own it was the best for them both; for in so numerous a society of course they were necessarily apart, and any coldness was little remarked. She could not help being aware that the distance between them, and the awkwardness of their manner, had rather increased than worn off. And could it be otherwise? Two people no way connected can live under the same roof mutually cold and careless, and still be perfectly good friends, for the one will think so little about the other, that, when thrown together by chance, their manners will wear the ease of indifference. But between Fitzhenry and Emmeline, this was impossible. Both entirely engrossed by one feeling, which was to be concealed from the other, they had no *point de réunion*, no neutral ground on which to meet; and the more poor Emmeline's affections became engaged, the more—and she felt conscious of it herself—the more timid and cold her manner grew towards her husband, and that of course reacted on Fitzhenry's. He evidently too was now much out of spirits, and looked ill. Mr. Moore's gaiety seemed too much for him; he rallied him too much on his gravity, and on his lately acquired married importance, as he called it, appearing to Emmeline purposely to take pleasure in tormenting him.

Mr. Pelham seemed the friend he preferred, and yet, after their being long together, Fitzhenry always appeared more than usually abstracted and dejected. Mr. Pelham too was the person who seemed to pay the most attention, and to take

the greatest interest in herself. She fancied, indeed, that he watched them both; but it was always with such a kind, compassionate, benignant look, that she did not, as with Mr. Moore, shrink from his scrutiny.

The winter was now far advanced; hunting and shooting kept the gentlemen almost entirely out of doors, and Emmeline and her female companions were generally all the morning left to themselves. One rainy day, on which it was impossible for them to leave the house, and when Lady Saville had run through or yawned over every novel and review in the drawing-room, she proposed, for the sake of exercise, to go all over the house. "I have never yet even been admitted into your sanctum sanctorum, Lady Fitzhenry, pray let me go."

"Oh! pray do," echoed a young lady, starting up from a table at which she had been seated the whole morning, with most laudable industry engaged in working a purse, and endeavouring to make a hearts-ease out of invisible blue and yellow beads. "Do let us go; it will get us through this dull morning so nicely; and really without Mr. Moore and the battledoor and shuttlecock, one don't know what to do with oneself."

Emmeline, always wishing to be obliging, led the way to her apartment.

"How comfortable! how pretty!" all exclaimed. "Did you fit up this room yourself?" enquired Lady Saville. Emmeline answered, that she found it as it was when she first came to Arlingford. "What a delightful, gallant husband!" said Lady Saville. "Now that was his foreign education; all men should be sent abroad before they marry, to be properly drilled; it improves them wonderfully." Poor Emmeline could not quite assent to this observation.

"Oh! dear, dear Lady Fitzhenry!" said the purse-making young lady (by name Miss Selina Danvers), flying up to her and seizing her hand with ecstatic fondness, "I have the

greatest possible favour to ask of you; pray, pray grant it—it is to let me see your wedding-dress; I shall be more obliged to you than I can express."

"There is nothing remarkable to see," said Emmeline, coldly, not feeling the smallest wish to behold, or have discussed, what brought back so painfully to her mind the day on which she wore it.

"That is really being very modest," said Lady Saville, "for it was beautiful, and, moreover, you looked remarkably pretty in it; and I own I was rather provoked at my worthy cousin Fitzhenry's excessive stupidity or bashfulness, for I don't think he ever looked at you. I never saw a man appear so completely stupified, and put out as he was at his marriage; and when I wished him joy, he stared, and looked as silly and sheepish as possible. Love certainly had upon him the direct contrary effect from what it had on Cymon."

"Dear, how odd!" exclaimed Miss Danvers. "But who is Mr. Cymon, and what did it do to him? Now don't laugh at me so, one can't know every body; and I don't go every year to London as you do."

This new scent about Cymon, however, could not put the wedding finery out of Selina's head, and she teazed poor Emmeline till she obtained from her a reluctant consent that her maid and the gown should be rung for; and soon the whole paraphernalia was exhibited with pride and pomp by Mrs. Jenkins.

Miss Selina went into ecstasies at each separate flower and flounce, and putting the veil over her head, she flew to the glass to look at herself. "What a beauty it is!" she exclaimed. "Dear, how I should like to be married! one looks so interesting in a lace gown and veil. Lady Fitzhenry, were you very much frightened at the ceremony? did you cry? For my part, I don't think I should be able to keep my countenance for laughing."

"At what?" demanded Lady Saville.

"Oh! I don't know at what, in particular; but I think it would be so odd for me to be married."

"Why should it be more odd to you than any one else?" rejoined Lady Saville.

"Oh! I can't tell, only because I think it would be so droll —but I should like it of all things—and then the new chaise-and-four, and the favours, and driving off in such a bustle, and all the people in the street staring at one; and one's wedding-ring, and one's new name; it would all be so charming. If I was you, Lady Fitzhenry, I think I should have rung the bell the minute I was married, to have had the pleasure of hearing the servant say, 'Yes, *my Lady*.' Oh! I have another great favour to ask," continued Miss Selina, who had by this time satisfied her curiosity about the gown and veil; "do let me see your picture of Lord Fitzhenry."

Emmeline assured her she had none to show her.

"No? Dear, how odd! I thought when people were married, they had always their picture painted in miniature as a thing of course, and I had even settled beforehand how *ours* should be done—I all in clouds and thin drapery by Mrs. Mee, you know, and he in armour."

"And who is the *he* whose costume you have already fixed upon?" enquired Lady Saville.

"Oh! I don't know; whoever I may chance to marry. But, Lady Fitzhenry, how did it happen that you had no miniatures done? for yours was a regular marriage, was it not? Every body delighted, and jewels and plate, and all that sort of thing; and then Lord Fitzhenry is so handsome. Lady Saville, don't you think Lord Fitzhenry is the most beautiful man you ever saw, and the most agreeable?"

"Why I don't know how far I may venture to answer that question. What would Sir George say?" replied Lady Saville, laughing.

"Oh! Sir George is very tall and good looking too, and dresses himself very well; but still he does not put on his

neckcloth near so well as Lord Fitzhenry; and after all, the neckcloth is the principal thing in a man, and Lady Fitzhenry is certainly the most fortunate of people; but she takes her good luck very quietly, I must say—not even to have talked of her wedding gown! was it not strange?"

By this time every thing was thoroughly admired, examined, and descanted upon in Emmeline's room, and many a question put to her, which she found rather difficult to answer.

"Well, where do we proceed to next?" said Lady Saville, going out into the gallery. "What room is this?" pointing to Ernest's.

"Oh! that is Lord Fitzhenry's," answered Emmeline hastily; "we had better not go there."

"Why not?" enquired Lady Saville.

"He may be engaged with business," replied Emmeline, conscious she was colouring.

"Engaged? why you know he is out hunting twenty miles off; but at any rate, we may knock and demand admission." And she knocked at the door. No sound was to be heard, and she turned the lock. "Why I really believe, Lady Fitzhenry," continued she, "you are afraid of going in, for fear of finding all my worthy cousin's former *chères amies* hanging round the room on pegs, like Blue-beard's wives."

At this sally, Miss Danvers laughed violently. "I am dying to go in.—Dear Lady Saville, pray, pray open the door; I am sure we shall find something odd."

Emmeline could think of no further reason to give for not entering; and, in truth, felt rather glad of the opportunity so forced upon her to visit that room where Fitzhenry had passed and still passed so many hours of his life. A person's apartment is certainly the next best thing to their society, and even ranks in the gratification of our feelings before a letter; we seem to be admitted into all their occupations, even into their very thoughts. Then the little things belonging to them scattered about identify them so much to us. Every one must

have experienced this when going into the room that has been inhabited by some dear friend immediately after their departure; the pens they have used still lying wet on the table, the books they had been reading—a glove, or handkerchief forgotten. How strongly do such trifles sometimes affect us, and give us a deceitful feeling of their presence!

Lady Saville had opened the door into Fitzhenry's room, and Emmeline had gone in with the rest, when luckily, after Miss Selina had expressed her astonishment at Lord Fitzhenry's sleeping in the little couch bed, and had enquired of Lady Saville whether it was not very droll—a book of French caricatures attracted and fixed the attention of the whole party, and Emmeline was thus left at liberty to look at every thing in the room, and indulge in her own reflections.

*There* was the table at which he wrote, the chair on which he sat, and she placed herself in it. On the table, among a confusion of parliamentary papers, pamphlets, bills, &c. was a volume of Petrarch, lying open, as if lately read, and by it the cover of a letter recently torn open. It was directed to Fitzhenry, and in a woman's hand. On the seal, were the words—"*Tout ou rien*"—words that said volumes to poor Emmeline's heart. She tried to make out the post-mark, but it was so blotted over that she could only decypher the date, which convinced her it had been that very day received! With a sort of shudder she threw it down again, and, getting up from her seat, her eye was attracted by two drawings that hung over the chimney-piece—they were evidently views in Italy and Greece. In both these, were the same two figures: below one of the drawings, these lines from Lord Byron were written:—

"Sweet Florence! those were pleasant times
When worlds were staked for ladies eyes.
Had bards as many realms as rhymes,
Thy charms might raise new Anthonies.

" Though fate forbids such things to be,
Yet, by thine eyes and ringlets curled,
I cannot lose a world for thee,
But would not lose thee for a world."

Beneath the other drawing, was a Greek inscription. They were slight sketches, and the figures were small; one of them had an air of Fitzhenry not to be mistaken by her who knew his every look and gesture. The other was a female figure. Emmeline's eyes were rivetted on the drawings; she could not doubt who, and what they represented; some days of peculiar enjoyment, some tender moments were thus recalled, and poor Emmeline's spirit groaned within her.

On the mantle-piece, lay Fitzhenry's pencil-case, pocket-book, and several of those sort of trifles that seem so intimately connected with the person to whom they belong. Emmeline had a gratification in taking them in her hand, and examining them minutely: at last, she found a small turquoise brooch which she had often observed in his neck-handkerchief; it had apparently been originally meant for a woman's ornament. Emmeline had on one almost exactly similar. The temptation to exchange them was too strong to be resisted—with trembling fingers she undid her own pin; but again carefully examined Fitzhenry's, for fear of his detecting the exchange. At the back of his, in small letters, she saw "Firenze," but they were almost worn away; her courage however nearly failed her, although she thought she might contrive to scratch something on her own broach to ressemble the inscription, but just at that minute, Lady Saville, who had finished her book of caricatures, and looked at every thing in the room, coming up, proposed their proceeding to the rest of the house—Emmeline almost started with the embarrassment of guilt : she

had no time for further doubt, she hastily threw down on the marble slab her own brooch, and carried off her husband's.

Almost terrified at what she had done, when they met in the drawing-room before dinner, she looked anxiously at Fitzhenry's handkerchief, but when he turned towards the light, she had the satisfaction to see her own pin placed as usual, and, consequently, that he had not discovered her robbery.

To those who may be inclined to think the feelings of Emmeline on such a trifle exaggerated, we have only to say, that proving themselves never to have been *in love* we can no more attempt to speak to their feelings than to describe colours to a person born blind.

Delighted and elated with her prize, poor Emmeline's spirits rose above their now usual state, and when, after dinner, Lady Saville declared she wanted exercise to get rid of a headache, and proposed dancing, Emmeline readily forwarded her wish and offered her service as musician. Every one willingly acquiesced, and they soon made up a quadrille. Fitzhenry and Mr. Pelham were the only two who did not join in the dance, but continued standing over the fire, seemingly engaged in very earnest conversation. When the quadrille was ended, Emmeline played a waltz; this was still less to be resisted, and the whole party immediately swung rouud the room.

"I can play a waltz," said Mrs. Danvers, the purse-making young lady's mother, who had just then entered the room—"I can't bear to see you, Lady Fitzhenry, labouring at the pianoforte, do let *me* play who can do nothing else; and do you go and join the dancers."—And she insisted on Emmeline resigning her post.

All were engaged: there was no one left to waltz with. Emmeline was young; by nature gay, she liked

dancing as all gay young people do. The music, the sight of others dancing, all had revived her former love for the amusement, and, not liking to deprive any one else of her partner, she set off alone after the rest. Unsupported, and lately out of practise, she son grew giddy, the room turned round, she knew not where she went, and, to save herself from falling, she caught hold of something she had run against, putting her other hand over her eyes till the dizziness had gone off. When it had subsided, still keeping her hold, she looked up to see where she was.

It was her husband's arm she had hold of.

She could scarcely check a scream of alarm which burst from her on seeing what she had done: she hastily withdrew her hand, her flushed cheek turning deadly pale. Fitzhenry was looking at her attentively, but with apparent surprise, and indeed, even apparent displeasure.

The whole occurrence, which did not occupy above a minute, had been mistaken by the dancers. They thoughtshe was proposing to him to waltz with her, and Mr. Moore hastily said, "That is right, Lady Fitzhenry; make that lazy fellow dance. No one waltzes so well or *was* so fond of it; and it is too ridiculous his giving himself already the airs of an old married man!"

"Lord and Lady Fitzhenry dance together! Oh! that will be charming," exclaimed Miss Selina, clapping her hands in foolish ecstasy.

"Come, come along, Fitzhenry," rejoined Mr. Moore: "don't be bashful; ask Lady Fitzhenry in proper form to do you the favour of dancing with you."

"Certainly," said Ernest, rather embarrassed: "certainly—with pleasure, if Lady Fitzhenry wishes——I mean, if she will waltz with me, and can get no better partner."

"Oh! I never meant that—I was only giddy———," said Emmeline, hardly knowing what she said or did. The other waltzers stopped. "Now, Lady Fitzhenry, we will follow you,"

said the persecuting Mr. Moore. Any further explanation or objection was impossible: waltz together they must—and Fitzhenry put his arm round her.

All those who talk of the waltz as of a dance possessing no other attraction, no more interest than that of any other, and owing the ill name it bears merely to a cry raised against it by prejudice in a country where as yet it is but newly introduced, have never waltzed with *him* or *her* they love; for then their own feelings would answer, and silence them.

Emmeline felt her husband's arm round her waist; her hand was clasped in his, and his breath played on her forehead. Her feelings almost overcame her! Her heart beat so violently that she could hardly breathe, and again her head turned round.

Fitzhenry, as Mr. Moore had said, was an excellent waltzer —he had waltzed much at Vienna, where his intimacy with Lady Florence had commenced by her teaching him this very dance. Without any seeming effort, he bore along Emmeline's slight form—for already she could hardly support herself. She fancied he pressed her more closely to him—it could, alas! be only fancy; but quite overcome, and complaining of faintness, she begged him, in a scarcely audible voice, to stop. He immediately withdrew his arm, took her to a chair, and seeing her really near fainting, fetched her a glass of water.

Every thing conspired to overpower poor Emmeline: it was with difficulty she restrained her tears, and as soon as she could trust herself to walk, she left the room. But no Fitzhenry followed to ask an explanation of her conduct; and in darkness, and alone, she no longer endeavoured to stifle her feelings. Fitzhenry was evidently annoyed: there had been an expression of displeasure, of formal, almost ironical civility on his countenance, when forced to offer himself as her partner, that she had never seen before, and which penetrated her heart. And then, though mere common compassion had

made him assist her when unwell, yet it was almost beyond his usual coldness to allow her to leave the room alone, careless of what had affected her, or whether she had recovered or not.

It was impossible to endeavour to explain herself before others, and Fitzhenry now carefully avoided their ever being *tête-à-tête*. "Thus ends," thought Emmeline, "the vain dream—the last hope of ever winning him! Indifference is growing into dislike; and soon we shall be more than total strangers to each other."

As she uttered these words, a gentle knock at the door made her heart beat. It could only be him—and in an instant passing to the most delightful anticipations, with a trembling voice she gave leave to enter. The door opened: but even through the darkness of the room, she soon saw her mistake, for it was merely Lady Saville who came to enquire after her.

"My dear Lady Fitzhenry," said she, "I fear you are not well, so I ventured to come and doctor you a little."

"Oh! it is nothing," replied Emmeline, with difficulty restraining fresh tears of disappointment: I have not waltzed lately, and it made me very giddy that is all."

"And perhaps, you should not have waltzed now," added Lady Saville; "for really you have not been looking well lately; we have all remarked it. You overfag yourself with your constant endeavours to amuse our good country neighbours, and with those long country rides which you will take, for I am sure you are not strong."

Emmeline wishing to avoid all conversation on the subject of her looks and health, conscious that both had suffered from her loss of happiness, hastily got up, declaring she was quite recovered; and, after bathing her eyes and temples with some cold water, she proposed returning to the drawing-room.

"But are you quite sure you are well enough?" said Lady

Saville—" had you not better lie down a little, for you still look pale."

Emmeline insisted on going.

" Well I understand your not liking to make a fuss and excite enquiries ; for one's friends will tease one so with remedies : so if you are really able, come along, lean on me ; and she drew Emmeline's arm within hers.

When they entered the room, Fitzhenry went up to them: hoped Emmeline was quite recovered, and brought a chair for her ; but all was done in cold civility, and no more passed. Mr. Pelham came immediately and sat by her, evidently and purposely entering into conversation to save her from being an object of attention to the rest. The dancing went on ; but Emmeline's spirits were gone, and she took no more part in what passed around her that evening.

" What capital fun we have had !" said Selina, as they all left the drawing-room for the night. I am sure I could dance all day long: could not you, Lady Fitzhenry ? Don't you like dancing of all things ? I am sure you must, you dance so well."

Emmeline absently answered—" I *have* liked it, but it is a taste that soon goes off."

" Soon, indeed !" said Mrs. Danvers, who had been playing the waltzes and quadrilles to them for the last hour, " if it is already gone with you : why you talk as if you were already an old woman, Lady Fitzhenry. I don't think it is many months since I saw you apparently enjoying the amusement as much as any one—indeed, not many minutes."

Emmeline vexed at her forgetfulness, did not answer. She saw her husband's eyes were fixed upon her ; and anxious to put an end to so disagreeable an evening, wishing them all a good night, she hastened into her own room.

When there, she found that the brooch—the precious brooch, was missing. She dared not tell her maid of her loss, for fear that any enquiry after it would lead to a dis-

covery of her theft; but as soon as she was gone, and all quiet in the house, Emmeline examined every part of her own room, of the gallery, and of the drawing room; but all in vain. Tired and annoyed, she was at last obliged to give up the search, trusting that daylight would betray its hiding place.

## CHAPTER VI.

——It grieved her not a little, tho'
She seemed it well to beare.
And thus she reasons with herself—
'Some fault perhaps in me,
'Somewhat is done, that so he doth:
'Alas! what may it be?
'How may I winne him to myself?
'He is a man, and men
'Have imperfections; it behoves
'Me pardon nature then.'

*The Patient Countess.*

The next morning, before her maid came to her, Emmeline renewed her search, but with as little success as on the night before. It delayed her dressing; and when she entered the breakfast-room, all were assembled—Mr. Moore coming in at an opposite door at the same minute.

"Who owns a turquoise pin?" said he, in a loud sententious voice, as he approached the breakfast table, "with some mysterious, and, I conclude, very sentimental letters at the back."

Fitzhenry, who was reading the newspaper, instantly laid it down. He felt for his brooch, and forgetting that he had not put on any that morning, exclaimed, at the same moment with Emmeline—"I do!" Both looked at each other, and coloured.

"Well, I never knew such a pattern pair," said Moore; "they have so conscientiously every thing in common, that they have but one brooch between them, and I suppose wear it alternately. Pin of my pin—brooch of my brooch," added he, laughing: "without the help of Solomon, I really don't know how to decide the matter between you, for it is quite a law case in his line, and much beyond me."

"Pray give it me," said Emmeline, in a low voice, inexpressibly annoyed.

"The brooch is mine," said Fitzhenry, holding out his hand for it, and apparently not much less discomposed.

"Hold, if you please," said Moore; "I have not studied the law, up three pair of stairs in Lincoln's Inn, and poured over musty books for nothing. I must have proofs and witnesses before I adjudge the disputed prize. Let us call into court the letters at the back, they may throw some light on the subject—Let me see," continued he, putting on his nose the spectacles of one of the company, and affecting an important legal tone, "*F i* is very easily distinguished, but what the deuce is it that comes between that and *z e*, which are plainly the letters at the end. *F i* looks a little as if it really did belong to one Lord Fitzhenry, I must own; (if he is so unsentimental as to wear his own name next his heart;) but even under that extraordinary supposition, I can't turn *z e* into *r y* by any trick of law or logic—so I am still at a loss; for do what I will, I cannot, with these letters, spell *fidele*, or *fidelità*, or any of those pretty words."

Emmeline said no more; she tried to busy herself with the breakfast-things, but poured out every thing wrong, and made all sorts of strange mistakes. Fitzhenry got up, and went to Mr. Moore.

"Come, Moore, no more of this nonsense; give me the brooch, and Lady Fitzhenry and I can afterwards settle to which of us it belongs."

"As lord of the manor, I suppose you claim all stray goods,"

rejoined Mr. Moore; "otherwise, I must say yours is a most despotic measure, and a little like the lion in the fable."

At this, Miss Danvers, who had been some time tittering, burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

"How droll Mr. Moore is!" she exclaimed: "pray, Lord Fitzhenry, let me look at this brooch; there is such a fuss about it that it must be something very extraordinary, and I am sure I could make out the letters," said she, looking significantly at Moore, "for I know all sorts of mottos and sentiments, and those kind of things, for brooches, and bracelets, and purses and seals,"—and she held out her hand for the brooch.

"It is not worth looking at," said Fitzhenry, coldly, as he put it into his pocket.

"I think the lion is a little gruff," whispered the young lady to her neighbour at the breakfast table, and again laughed violently at what she imagined to be wit.

"Well," she continued, "I give notice, that when I marry, I mean to have my own way, and be my own mistress, and not be so submissive as Lady Fitzhenry. I shall have as many brooches as I please, given me by whom I please; for I suspect," she added, significantly, "there is some story about this brooch—some mystery we none of us know; but I am determined I will find it out: it is just the sort of thing I like—and see how Lady Fitzhenry blushes—I am getting near the mark, I suspect."

"Don't rattle on so foolishly, Selina," said her mother, trying to check her talkative daughter.

"That is what mamma always says," retorted Miss Danvers pettishly, and looking round for support in her denial of the charge of folly. "Mamma never lets me speak, which is very hard, for I am sure I am saying no harm," added she, addressing Mr. Moore, whom she seemed to have dubbed her champion.

"I never presume to contradict mammas," answered he;

" otherwise I should say that such a mouth could never utter any thing which it would not be agreeable to hear."

The young lady giggled, and encouraged by the compliment, went on—

" Pray, Mr. Moore, *seriously*, as you are a lawyer, will you tell me, have husbands a right by law to read all their wives' letters, as well as seize on their naughty brooches? Lady Fitzhenry, does Lord Fitzhenry read all your letters?"

" I should think he would be sorry to take the trouble," said Emmeline, forced to reply to so direct a question, although from the quickness with which one silly idea chased another in Selina's mind, she seldom required any answer.

" Why? have you a great many correspondents? I do so like correspondents, dont you? and to get letters all crossed, and written under the seal, and every where; is it not delightful? I have so many friends I doat upon, that there is not a day I don't write two or three long letters, and tell them every thing I feel and think; and then it passes away the morning so well; don't it, Mr. Moore?"

" Why, I really cannot boast of as many confidential friends, or as much capacity of heart as you seem to be blessed with," said he; " and, moreover, I have nothing to confide; so that I fear a very small note would contain all my feelings and thoughts."

" Dear, how shocking! and how odd! I have so many charming friends, to whom I have so much to say, that I could write to them for ever; and then, when we have nothing particular to tell, we suppose ourselves people in a novel, and so carry on a story, you know, under feigned names: mine is Celestina."

" It must be very interesting; and may I ask," continued Moore, " who is the hero worthy of such a heroine?"

" Oh, that I won't tell," said Miss Danvers, slyly—" that is a secret; but, if you choose to guess, I will tell you when you are wrong. So far I will go; but I won't allow of any ques-

tions about tall and short, and fat and thin, and that sort of thing."

Here all laughed; and Selina, quite satisfied that it was at her wit, glanced round the table with an eye of triumph, till, encountering Fitzhenry's, grave preoccupied countenance, which, plainly showed that he had not joined in the applause, she said: "Ah, Lord Fitzhenry is still thinking of his brooch, and of that blush of Lady Fitzhenry's, which seems to stick in his throat."

"I am sure you are very good to take so much interest in what concerns us," replied Fitzhenry, dryly.

"Oh no, it is not good at all; for it is my greatest amusement to find out every body's little secrets, and I am determined I will get at the bottom of this somehow." After a pause, she addressed Emmeline. "By the bye, now I recollect, you were very busy poking about all Lord Fitzhenry's things in his room, yesterday morning; but what that may have to do with all this, I can't just now make out."

Fitzhenry looked up astonished, and his eyes were fixed on Emmeline's crimson cheek; but, though he looked at her attentively for a few minutes, he said nothing; and, by this time, the frowns from Mrs. Danvers had become so repeated, and so decided, that they at last succeeded in checking the exuberant loquacity of the lively Selina.

An awkward silence ensued; every one seemed disconcerted, and Fitzhenry, for the first time, to Emmeline's observation, appeared totally out of humour. He soon got up from the breakfast-table, and left the room.

It was a thoroughly wet day; even the gentlemen could not go out—and, to pass the morning, Lady Saville proposed practising some songs, in which one of them took a part. Poor Emmeline, who could not rally her spirits at all, felt little inclined to sing—but she complied, till at length, fatigued and harassed, she gave up her place at the pianoforte

to Selina, and went to her own room. There on the table she found a note addressed to her, in Fitzhenry's handwriting. She trembled as she opened it—it contained her own brooch, and these words:—

"I return you, what I suppose to be yours; how it came into my possession, I know not. I have kept to my promise—I do all in my power to promote your happiness—do then the same by me, and respect feelings which I have honestly confessed to you.

"FITZHENRY."

Emmeline read this over and over, scarcely knowing what the latter words could refer to; so perfectly innocent did she feel of any infringement of their agreement, and so satisfied that she had never, directly or indirectly, to him or others, hinted at her cruel situation. However, at last, calling to mind the way in which Selina had that morning so provokingly entertained the company with her silly remarks, she felt convinced, in spite of Fitzhenry's well-known contempt for the person who made them, that they had raised suspicions in his mind of her having taken advantage of his absence to invade his apartment, and pry into his secrets; perhaps had even led him to imagine that she had stolen his favourite brooch with the foolish intention of wantonly tormenting him.

Wounded tenderness, and offended pride, alternately wrung her heart. To clear herself was impossible, without confessing feelings, which she could not bring herself to avow to one who evidently despised and abhorred her. In total despair at the cruelly unfavourable light in which untoward circumstances always placed her before him, whom it was the first, almost the only wish of her heart to conciliate and please, poor Emmeline wept in bitterness of soul.

Some explanation on her part, however, was absolutely

necessary, but it was long before she could resolve on what to say. At length, entering into no particulars, she wrote merely these words.

"You do me great injustice, and totally mistake me: explanation, however is impossible—indeed, would probably be only uninteresting and irksome to you, and therefore I shall not attempt any."

"EMMELINE."

How to give this to Fitzhenry unnoticed was the next difficulty, without the risk of a *tête-à-tête* interview, which in the present nervous and irritated state of her feelings, she had no courage to seek. She heard him in his room, which joined to hers, and there he remained all the morning alone.

With her note concealed in her hand, and with tell-tale eyes, Emmeline joined the party at the usual hour of luncheon, in case her absence might create surprise. Mr. Pelham's attention was soon attracted towards her.

"I fear you have not yet recovered your waltzing of last night," said he kindly, as if to account for her disordered appearance, which no one could help observing: "you have still a headache I am sure, and I am not surprised at it. When you *give balls*, you should put out your stoves; I wonder how any of the dancers could stand the heat of the room last night: a walk would do you good; I think it is clearing up; will you let me accompany you?"

Emmeline feeling, in spite of her endeavours, that tears still forced themselves into her eyes, and aware that she was not quite in a fit state to make the *agréable* to her company, readily agreed. The fresh air revived and composed her, and, by degrees, her usual spirits returned. Pelham first talked on indifferent subjects. At length, some improvement in the place which he was observing, brought in Fitzhenry's name, when, after a moment's pause, he said—"I see my friend

Fitzhenry has no patience with that poor silly girl, Miss Danvers. I have often lectured him on the subject of his want of toleration for folly, and of the way that he is apt to take things that should only be laughed at, *au grand sérieux*. It is the fault of all grave, substantial characters like his; and he allows trifles to go too deep with him. To be sure, the poor Selina is a fool, *comme on en voit peu;* but it is not necessary to attend to her, and I should be almost tempted with regard to her, to give *you* the same advice as to Fitzhenry, not any way to notice the nonsense that flows from her. There are some people who can make themselves important in society only by teazing others; and if they once find out this power, they never let it rest unemployed. I am very impudent I think," added Pelham, " in presuming to give you advice; but, as the friend of Fitzhenry, I feel that I have a sort of established right to lecture even you."

Emmeline looked up and smiled, to show in what good part she took what was so kindly meant.

" You are very young, my dear Lady Fitzhenry," continued he; " very new to the world, and your own character is naturally so open, so natural,—that you are perhaps *too* artless. Some part we almost all must, to a degree, act in this world. We are all sometimes obliged to put a mask on our features and feelings. You know I am a *diplomate* by profession," said Pelham, endeavouring to give a light turn to his advice, seeing how much at the moment his *thin skinned* auditor needed the mask he talked of. " Fitzhenry has been much used to the world—to women of the world," continued he, with a quick, embarrassed manner. " Perhaps *you* are too much without art, for him to believe you artless, paradoxical as this may sound. In short, as you are destined to live in a wicked, unfeeling world, I could, I believe, wish you to be a little more wicked and unfeeling yourself."

At this moment, Fitzhenry, with his gun and dogs, appeared at a little distance, and when he saw them, came

towards them. It was fortunate, for it would have been difficult for Pelham and Emmeline to have extricated themselves from the conversation in which they were engaged; for, vague as it might have appeared to any third person, those concerned both feared they had gone too far; the one, in what he had said, the other, in what she had listened to.

As Fitzhenry approached, Emmeline resolved she would endeavour to exert that degree of self-control which Pelham recommended, and a feeling of offended pride, and of injustice towards her on Fitzhenry's part, enabled her to succeed. She drew her bonnet over her face, and though her heart beat, and at first her voice trembled, she forced herself to speak on indifferent subjects, as if nothing had past, or rather, as if what *had* passed, had not had power to wound her; and, taking an opportunity when Pelham was a yard or two behind, she held out her note to Fitzhenry. For a minute, he seemed reluctant to take it; but the next, received it from her hand, and putting it hastily within his waistcoat, immediately began talking with Pelham about the view he was then looking at.

When they met at dinner-time, Fitzhenry's manner to her was as usual; but the party was so large, that they could have little intercourse. In the evening, to avoid any possibility of the waltzing scene of the preceding night, Emmeline immediately took out her work, about which she pretended to be particularly interested, and left the rest of the party to provide for their own amusement.

She and Fitzhenry still appeared to be the objects of Mr. Moore's particular observation, and for that purpose, seating himself by Emmeline, "I hope Lady Fitzhenry," said he, "you have forgiven me for not proving myself a better advocate for you this morning; but really Fitzhenry's frowns were so very *eloquent* and *convincing*, that I could say no more on the subject."

"And you need not say more now," answered Fitzhenry,

rather impatiently, without taking his eyes from the Review he was reading; "that foolish affair is settled; we have both our own, and both are satisfied."

"Alas!" thought Emmeline, "how much he is mistaken!"

Moore looked at them alternately with an air of incredulity. "Well, you are strange mysterious people," said he; "but if you are content, I am sure so am I;" and, laying his hand on the first book he saw, and which proved to be Childe Harold, he read some lines of it aloud.

"Are you a great admirer of Lord Byron, Lady Fitzhenry?" said he.

"Of course," replied Emmeline, forcing a smile.

"Of course of his poetry," continued Moore; "but I hope *not* of his sentiments: his descriptions of scenery are beautiful, and sometimes those of feeling and affection; but when he comes to paint his own dark, venom-spitting mind, he is hateful; and it always provokes me, that he should feel the beauties of nature so deeply, and not be the better for that feeling. Have you ever been in Italy, Lady Fitzhenry?"

"No, never," said Emmeline shortly, not much liking to get on such tender ground.

"I should have sworn you had; I have heard you talk as if you knew all Italy by heart; and you have in your composition, that suavity of mind and temper which the sun, the air, the beauteous scenes of Italy, the dark blue of its seas give. I should have been ten times more detestable than I am, had I not passed so much of my life in the pure, soft atmosphere of Italy. I don't know, by the bye, that my friend Fitzhenry there proves my doctrine true; I don't think he has benefited much by such education; vide the pin affair. But I suppose it is only the effect of change of climate, and that the cold, dark fogs of this country, have again contracted his heart, and made it selfish and English."

Fitzhenry said nothing, and apparently was engrossed by

his book. Mr. Moore continued. "Many a battle Fitzhenry and I have had about Lord Byron—I wonder what side you would take. I never can feel for his imaginary woes. What the deuce is the matter with the fellow? what does he want? He has had every thing this world can give. All the fools and fine ladies running after him, and paying him court *à l'envi l'un de l'autre;* and yet he went grumbling and whining about, despising, and turning up his nose at us all, who are ten times better than himself. He chose, too, to hate and ill-treat his wife, after he had insisted, almost against her own will, or at least against her judgment, to marry her, and she an heiress, into the bargain. This was to be a new distress; and on this he begun, *de plus belle*, to grumble and whine, and moreover to blackguard. Now, Fitzhenry, how do you defend all this?"

"I don't pretend to defend him in any thing," said Fitzhenry, very impatiently; "I only say, that persons with totally different feelings and characters cannot judge of each other. What would be keen suffering to one, might be none to another. I might answer you in the words of Madame de Staël—"*Les gens médiocres ne cessent de s'étonner que le talent ait des besoins différens des leurs;* and as for Lord Byron's private history, neither you nor I have any business with it, or know any thing about it."

"The deuce we don't?" said Moore, "many thanks, *par paranthèse*, for your pretty compliment to me, *au sujet de la médiocrité;* but we will let that pass: I am well used to such from you," said he, laughing; "but I cannot give up so quietly Lord Byron, who certainly has had the bad taste (to say no worse) to take pains to tell us all what a villain he is, so that few of us can be ignorant of his private history."

Fitzhenry said nothing; and resuming his book, turned away, as if the light hurt his eyes.

"Lady Fitzhenry, don't *you* agree with me about Lord Byron," continued the indefatigable Moore.

"I believe not," said Emmeline with a tremulous voice—"I *should* not—I think no one can, or should presume to judge of the feelings, hardly of the situation and conduct of another." An involuntary sigh finished the sentence; fortunately it escaped her neighbour's ear, as he was hastily turning over the leaves of the book, reading a line here and there.

"*Il faut pourtant être juste*," said Moore; "and, to give the devil his due, Lord Byron is in truth a most delightful poet. We all find that he describes our own thoughts and feelings, which we have not had the wit to put into rhyme ourselves. Here is a pretty specimen of sing-song sentiment, for instance:—

'Florence, whom I will love as well
As ever yet was said or sung,
(Since Orpheus sang his spouse from hell),
Whilst thou art fair, and I am young;

'Sweet Florence, those were pleasant times
When worlds were staked for ladies eyes;
Had bards as many realms as rhymes,
Thy charms might raise new Anthonies.

'Though fate forbids such things to be,
Yet, by thine eye and ringlets curled,
I cannot lose a world for thee,
But would not lose thee for a world.'

Prudent vows those, making them to depend on his own youth, and his fair one's beauty. What think you of that moral sentiment, Lady Fitzhenry?"

Emmeline dared not speak; she feared a double meaning might be given to whatever she said; but the crimson on her cheeks betrayed how well she knew the lines. Fitzhenry, for an instant, looked up—his face was scarcely less suffused than hers, and hastily rising from his seat, he left the room.

"Alas!" thought Emmeline, "again he will accuse me of braving him; of purposely wounding his feelings!" and it

was with difficulty she could conceal from Mr. Moore how much he had discomposed her.

The next day, when she went through the gallery, the door of Fitzhenry's room chanced to be open, and as her eyes eagerly wandered into it, she observed that the two drawings had disappeared from over the chimney. What this meant, she could but too well guess: she plainly saw that he suspected her of meanly endeavouring to pry into his feelings, and to trace each thought inimical to herself, with a view (perhaps he concluded) to gain at least the power of tormenting him, when hopeless of obtaining any other. "Oh, Fitzhenry!" thought she, "will the time ever come, when you will know me better, and learn to do me justice?"

## CHAPTER VII.

Call ye the city gay? its revels joyous?
—They may be so to you; for ye are young
(Belike) and happy. She is young in years,
But often in mid-spring will blighting winds
Do Autumn's work: and there is pain of heart
That doth the work of time; can cloud the brow,
And pale the cheek, and sober down the spirit.
This gewgaw scene hath fever charms for her,
Than for the crone, who, numbering sixty winters,
Pronounceth it all folly.—Wonder not
'Tis left thus willingly.

*Old Play.*

Parliament met early this year, and Lord Fitzhenry signified his attention of being in town at its opening. The party at Arlingford, therefore, before long, dispersed different ways; and, with a heavy heart, Emmeline went to settle herself in Grosvenor-street. Young as she was, and

disposed for gaiety as she had been but a few months past, she could, in her circumstances, only look to the world and to the routine of fashionable life in London with dismay. She would be thrown into a totally new society, where she had not a friend, scarcely an acquaintance. Had Fitzhenry been to her what he ought, how proudly would she, at her lover's side, have shown herself to an admiring world, as the being he had chosen. But this was not the situation of Emmeline, and she shrunk with a feeling of apprehension from the tumult in which she would be left deserted and solitary.

She foresaw, too, that a London life would necessarily throw her and her husband more apart; for, little as she saw of him in the country, yet still in the course of the day she was certain of being in his society and of hearing his voice, although seldom now addressed in conversation to herself. In town, it would be easier for him to avoid her, and she much feared he would take advantage of the opportunities offered.

And Emmeline was right in her conjectures. Under pretence of business, and attendance at the House of Commons, he was so constantly from home, that they rarely met. Their hours, too, were different; breakfast was no longer a certain moment for meeting; for, as it would now have obliged them to a daily *tête-à-tête*, it was brought to them in their separate apartments. During the morning, therefore, it was only by accident that they were ever together. Fitzhenry rarely dined at home, except when there was company; and, of course, living so much apart, Emmeline did not even know what his evening engagements were; and often they met by chance, for the first time, during forty-eight hours, in some distant place of amusement. If then he chanced to give her a look of kind recognition, poor Emmeline went home with her spirits raised, resolving to improve the advantage she had gained; but again, forty-eight hours passed in the same

manner, and, perhaps, if then again they accidentally met, he would scarcely notice her.

Thus deserted, she saw she must submit to endeavour to make to herself an independent existence; but it was a vain attempt when every thought, every feeling was with him. Lady Saville had offered herself as Emmeline's *chaperon*, on her first entry into the world of London society, and she could not have had a better companion; for Lady Saville had just feeling enough to enable her to perform all her social duties without a shadow of blame, and even in her own set to obtain the character of being remarkably goodnatured;—but she had none of those refined sentiments, which could lead her to read and detect the emotions of Emmeline's heart. Pre-occupation of mind, variation of spirits and complexion, on a look or word; all such symptoms of a stricken heart she attributed to mere physical causes; sometimes rallying Emmeline on her *vapeurs*, but generally too much amused and occupied herself to doubt her companion being equally so. Had that companion's heart been gay and free as it was but a few months back, what attractions the world, into which she was now, for the first time, introduced, might have had for her!

Emmeline's beauty had much improved since her marriage, and even by her loss of happiness; for, in the place of the mere expression of youthful joy and good-humour, was a look of *sentiment*, almost of languor, over her whole countenance and person, that added inexpressibly to its charm, and gave additional effect to her own peculiarly bright smile, when it was sometimes for a moment recalled.

As Fitzhenry's wife, she first attracted attention; and, with pleasing manners, rank, riches, youth, and beauty at once to recommend her, she was soon sought for, admired, and courted; and had she been willing to take advantage of the universal cry in her favour, Emmeline might, with little or

no trouble on her part, have been raised to that envied distinction, obtained no one knows how, or why, of being the *fashion*. For the world is so capricious and wayward in its preferences, that it often greets beings like Lady Fitzhenry (from circumstances regardless of its favour) with those winning, gracious smiles, which it perversely withholds from others most indefatigable in their efforts to obtain them. Witness the anxious and fatiguing labours of so many canditates for its patronage, their eternal struggles to grasp at what constantly escapes them, if for a moment they pause to take breath, or relax the little hold they have secured.

When individuals are blamed for either too much or too little love of the world, the different welcome it bestows seems little considered. How little does the situation of a courted, fashionable girl, surrounded by partners and admirers, and thus at liberty to give herself every impertinent air, which a vain mind, and a selfish, unfeeling heart dictate, resemble that of the unobserved, disregarded being, who, night after night, follows some elderly, undistinguished *chaperon* through the regular round of London amusements, and, seated by her hour after hour in dull neglect, seems at last to become a part of the bench she rests on, till reduced, perhaps, to be even envious of its insensibility; yet the same enlivening music plays to both; the same bright lights are cast on both, and the same glittering, buzzing crowd surrounds them; but question them, after their night's dissipation, as to the entertainment at which they were both present, and how different will be their accounts of the same scene—of what is called the gay world! of all worlds the most melancholy to those who are not gay.

And Emmeline, in spite of her general popularity, was among that number: how far she might equally have resisted its snares, and despised its pleasures, had there been corresponding joy within, we cannot pretend to say; but, as it

was, the first transient amusement produced by novelty, very soon went off, leaving her mind wearied and depressed, and, at any time, in the gayest scene, the sight of Fitzhenry at a distance, in the crowd of a ball-room, or at the opera, had power instantly to dispel every feeling of enjoyment; and then, totally regardless of what passed around her, or of the flattering compliments addressed to her, her eyes were rivetted to the spot where he was, busied in the eager examination of those near him, in search of that form, those features, which had captivated him; and often when she had observed him engrossed in conversation with any woman, or even when merely paying the common attentions of civility, breathless with agitation, she has enquired who the favoured being was, as if in strange eagerness "most to seek what she would most avoid;" but still Lady Florence never appeared; her dreaded name was never mentioned.

Although now, to all appearance, totally deserted by her husband, still he kept strictly to his engagement with her. Every possible indulgence and pleasure which money could give, were hers; and in such outward attentions he even seemed occupied about her. The horse she rode at Arlingford, although formerly his favourite hunter, was now considered as entirely hers, and without her even expressing a wish on the subject, had been brought to town for her exclusive use; he had himself secured a box at the opera for her, after having ascertained in what part of the house she would prefer it; and, on their first arrival in town, he had again repeated his desire, that she should ask any and every one she liked to the house. In short, she was again and again enjoined to consult only her own happiness and enjoyment in every thing: kind words in the mouth of any other husband; but, producing the painful conviction of her loneliness, they brought but tears into Emmeline's eyes, when hastily pronounced by Fitzhenry, with his hand on the lock

of the door, in order that he might leave her the instant they were uttered, and so escape the possibility of thanks or comment.

Wishing, however, to show that she was sensible of his intended kindness, in the liberty he gave, and with a last faint hope, that by making his home agreeable, she might entice him to be more with her, Emmeline determined to endeavour to collect society at her house. She took a favourable moment to inform Fitzhenry of her intention, and of the night for which she had made the invitations. He seemed much to approve of the plan, but said nothing as to his own attendance.

On the day appointed for the first party, Emmeline, as was generally now the case, dined alone. During her solitary repast, she made firm resolutions that she would act upon the advice Pelham had given her at Arlingford—put that mask on her feeling which he recommended, and adopt those manners of the world that he said Fitzhenry admired. Emmeline had a sort of natural *tact* on all such subjects; and, had she been in the habit of doing the honours of her own house, during her whole life, she could not have acquitted herself better. All were delighted with her, and with the evening's amusement. It was not till towards the close of it, that Fitzhenry appeared. Long had poor Emmeline's eyes anxiously wandered toward the door, watching for his entrance; and when at last he came, it was not without difficulty that she continued to perform her gay part with spirit; but a momentary break in what she was saying—a rapid beating of her heart, and the deepened colour in her cheek, alone betrayed her agitation at his presence.

He came up to her; remarked how well the rooms were lighted; complimented her on the disposal of the furniture—on her arrangement of the flowers: and, in return, the poor hypocrite played her part well. She carelessly asked his opinion as to the placing of the lamps and the pianoforte. Even

attempted at rallying him on his absence; and to all appearance no two people could be on an easier footing.

The company were by this time beginning to clear away. As they dispersed, Emmeline eagerly looked around for Fitzhenry. She thought he had noticed her more than usual, and she determined to follow up this little fancied success, by assuming a careless gaiety, which she certainly did not feel, but which she sometimes believed she would do well to adopt. When, therefore, she had performed her last act of civility to her last guest, she hurried back to the spot where she had left him. But he too had disappeared. Alone she paced the now silent, empty rooms, lost in thought, and totally forgetful of the lateness of the hour, until at length, the entrance of Reynolds rousing her from her trance, she hastily retired into her own room—but not to sleep.—Various thoughts agitated her mind: sometimes even hope (albeit of late not a usual visitor), forced itself in: Fitzhenry had certainly smiled on her; he had appeared pleased; had even seemed to take interest in her attempt, and she determined to persevere.

Emmeline counted the days to her next party, as a schoolgirl does those to her first ball; for, on its success she again built flattering expectations for the future—expectations which perhaps to herself were hardly to be defined. "But at all events, I shall certainly see him," she thought, as with most excuseable care and anxiety she endeavoured to improve, to the best advantage, those personal attractions which nature had bestowed upon her. But in vain she decked her hair with the freshest flowers; in vain she listened for, and anxiously watched the result of, each loud knock at her door. Every one she had asked, flew to her invitation (such is the power of novelty in London), all but *him* for whom the whole had been prepared.

Disheartened and dispirited, poor Emmeline almost resolved on seeking some pretext for putting off altogether her third en-

tertainment; but a good humoured word of recognition from her husband, as they met in the lobby of the opera-house, the Tuesday before, again made her yield to the natural buoyancy of her disposition; and Fitzhenry, having asked Pelham and the Savilles to dine with him on the day appointed for her party, his presence seemed thus secured. All now, therefore, appeared propitious to Emmeline. Fitzhenry himself was, on that day, evidently more disposed for cheerfulness than he had been of late; and the smallness of their party at dinner, obliging them to more intercourse than they had had for long, Emmeline gave way to the exhilaration of spirits belonging to youth and hope, and, her cheek again bright with the flush of enjoyment, she bore her part in the conversation with unusual liveliness. Emmeline was aware of this herself, and could not, moreover, help indulging in the flattering idea, that even Fitzhenry had (at least for that once) thought her agreeable. With a step made still more light than usual by the innocent exultation of the moment, she gaily bounded up to the drawing-room with Lady Saville, to make the necessary preparations for the expected company. Knowing how much Fitzhenry liked music, she had collected all the best Italian singers; and, with her companion, Emmeline was still occupied in arranging the lights and instruments, when Pelham and Sir George Saville joined them, but not Fitzhenry. Coffee came; still he did not appear. Half fearful of what she might learn, but not able to bear the suspense any longer, she at length, with an anxious look, enquired whether he was gone out.

"Oh no!" replied Pelham; "he is only answering a letter which he has just received; he will be here directly."

A flash of her own bright smile instantly re-illumined her features; and afterwards, in the middle of one of Camporese's beautiful songs, it glanced again over her countenance, for she saw Fitzhenry enter the room, and, for an instant, caught his eyes fixed upon her. But the song over, and after the ge-

neral stir and bustle that usually follows, she looked for him in vain. The crowd was now every minute thickening, and with difficulty Emmeline forced herself to address to each those common-place remarks which always equally weary those who make them, and those to whom they are made. She restlessly went from room to room on some excuse to herself as well as others, but her search was vain—he was gone!

At once the bright scene totally changed! although the music was beautiful, and the buzz of gaiety and happiness went round. Poor Emmeline, alone in the scene of enjoyment which she had herself created, was wretched. Gladly she at length saw her visitors depart, and the rooms gradually become empty; for her spirits, which had been so unusually excited, were totally exhausted, and her only object now was, the conclusion of that evening to which she had looked with such bright expectation. Lady Saville and Pelham remained the last.

"Well, my dear Lady Fitzhenry," said the former, "I staid to the end purposely to congratulate you on the full success of your *soirées;* nothing could have gone off better than they have done; every one declares that nobody understands the matter so well as Lady Fitzhenry. I wonder were you learnt the art," said she, as she looked, with a complimentary smile, into Emmeline's face. On that face, tears were slowly, and almost unconsciously stealing down. "Good heavens! Lady Fitzhenry!" exclaimed Lady Saville, "what is the matter?"

"Nothing," said Emmeline, provoked at her weakness: "but however well I may do the honours of my house, it is a fatigue to which I am new, and perfectly unequal. I have had a bad head headache all day; and I find the trouble of being agreeable so much greater than the reward, that however delightful my parties may be, I shall attempt them no more."

Poor Emmeline spoke in the impatient tone of vexation and disappointment—a tone so unusually heard from her lips, that Lady Saville looked at her astonished.

"How very foolish!" she exclaimed, "when nothing of the sort, I am sure, could succeed better, and when you ought to be so pleased and flattered by the general pleasure you have produced. In your place, I should be quite delighted; and then to give it all up merely because you happen at this minute to feel a little tired and exhausted, particularly when you seemed to enjoy it all so much yourself, as I am sure you did only an hour ago. What is it that has gone wrong to make you change your mind so suddenly?"

Emmeline only shook her head in reply; but encountering Pelham's grave look, it recalled to her mind his counsels, and brushing away her tears with her hand, and forcing a smile, she said, as gaily as she could—

"Well, we need not discuss the matter at present. I will think about it; but really, now, I must drive you away, and go to bed; for I am quite knocked up; and you see fatigue has already made a fool of me, as I dare say, if the truth was told, I cried like a child to think I had eaten my cake, and that these delightful parties were over."

Lady Saville, taking her hint, was preparing to depart, when Fitzhenry, who, on returning home, had still seen some carriages in the street, and therefore thought he could venture up stairs, entered the room. Lady Saville immediately went up to him. "Oh, Lord Fitzhenry! do second me; for I am trying to persuade your capricious, perverse wife, to give some more parties; for she says they don't repay her for the trouble; that they exhaust her, and that she will have no more. Now have they not been particularly agreeable? and does she not play the part of lady of the revels to perfection?"

Emmeline, who, on her husband's entrance, had walked to the further end of the room, now began busying herself

with a basket of flowers, forgetting that she could no longer have any excuse for the employment. As for Fitzhenry, he too seemed rather embarrassed by Lady Saville's direct questions; but soon recollecting himself—"I certainly think Lady Fitzhenry would do very wrong to give up what seemed to give herself, as well as every one else, so much pleasure."

Emmeline bent over the flowers to hide her face, which was crimsoned with pique and impatience, as she repeated to herself.—"What gives *me* so much *pleasure!* and that is all I have gained by my last attempt, still more to deceive him as to my real character, and real feelings. He thinks I am to be satisfied with all this noise and empty show of enjoyment; and that it will make up to the worldly fool, the insensible child, for the want of happiness!"

Lady Saville returned to her charge, begging Emmeline would at once name a day, and that she would again endeavour to secure Camporese for her.

Forced to answer, and no longer able even to pretend occupation with the flowers, she hastily composed herself; and, quietly saying she was too tired then to think of the matter, held out her hand to Lady Saville, wishing her good night.

The altered tone of Emmeline's voice, since he had last heard it, probably struck Fitzhenry, for he hastily raised his eyes towards her. Her countenance, her manner, all was changed; the bright colour in her cheeks was gone; the smile that had played round her mouth had vanished: Pelham's eyes too were fixed upon her, and Fitzhenry observed it. Again he glanced at them both, and then for some minutes seemed totally lost in thought, till Lady Saville, moving towards the door to go, and wishing him good night, he was roused from his reverie; he offered her his arm, and both he and Pelham went down stairs with her.

For a few minutes, Emmeline listened for Fitzhenry's return—she almost hoped he would enquire into the cause of

what he might deem her ill humour: in short, at that moment, she felt she should be glad of any opening from him that could possibly bring matters to a crisis, however painful that crisis might be; for she felt as if it was impossible to go on enduring her present existence. But, after pacing the room for some time in nervous anxiety, which increased on hearing a footstep on the stairs, she was at length obliged to give up even that hope, as Reynolds alone entered the room, and immediately after, she heard the door of Fitzhenry's apartment close.

Convinced that she had now done all she could; that she had battled with her fate as much as possible; and, seeing that every exertion and endeavour to please and win him, only seemed to cast her further from him, she resolved to give over the vain struggle, and for her own sake, at least, endeavour in reality to be the frivolous, heartless being he thought her. And thus, in a sort of desperation, flying from herself, and from a cheerless home, which only reminded her of her blighted youth and hopes, she followed Lady Saville to every dissipation that was proposed. The last, and apparently the gayest, at every amusement; bright with false smiles and false colours; poor Emmeline endeavoured to conceal, beneath excited spirits, an aching heart: but the labour was such, that it allowed of no respite. One day left to herself, her own sad reflections again rushed back, and with increased acuteness—all her disappointed, withered feelings, the suffering present, and the cheerless future, pressed upon her soul. To pause in the mad career of dissipation was therefore impossible. She danced, she laughed, she talked. All shyness, all feeling even, seemed to have vanished, and her eyes sparkled with that feverish dazzle, so unlike the bright sunshine of happiness, but so often mistaken for it by a thoughtless, uninterested observer. How falsely do those of the world mutually pass sentence on each other! Meeting, perhaps, merely in the gay resorts of fashion, each individual attributes to the other that worldliness and frivolity which

belongs to the scene, but which they apply to the character—and how false such judgments are, those may declare, who by peculiar circumstances, or duty of some sort, are drawn into such amusements, when from natural disposition and taste they may be particularly little suited to enjoy them.

Emmeline's looks, health, even temper, all seemed to suffer from the life she now led. Often, after an evening of apparent gaiety, on her return home, she was so agitated, and so ill, that many a night it was only by laudanum that she obtained rest. Jenkins repeatedly observed how "My lady" was changed; that she never now seemed to know her own mind; that she would often dress for an evening's amusement, and then, when the time came, dismiss her carriage, and flinging herself, in all her finery, on her bed, would cry bitterly; till, like a child, she fell asleep from mere fatigue; and then, next morning, she would laugh at what she called her nervous folly, and begin again her life of hurry and laborious amusement.

But poor Emmeline, made for better things, felt humbled at herself. Was this the life that a rational, accountable, immortal being should lead? Alas! was this the end of all those dreams of happiness which illume the mind, and warm the heart of youth? Worn out in body and spirits, Emmeline longed for Arlingford and quiet; and looked forward with something like pleasure to Easter, when she concluded Fitzhenry would propose going there.

Amid all those who now buzzed and fluttered around her, one friend always followed her steps with interest, one friend she always met with real pleasure. That friend was Pelham. Although he never, since the conversation at Arlingford, had in the most distant manner alluded to the estrangement between her and her husband, yet she could plainly perceive, that he was well aware of their real situation; and she could not help also observing, that, of late, Pelham and Fitzhenry were less cordial together than formerly, although both seem-

ed still anxious, when they met, to carry on the farce of friendship. But Pelham came much less often to their house than he used to do, and generally at those hours when Fitzhenry was most likely to be from home. This Emmeline every way regretted; she always had felt as if he was a link between them, and she had even vaguely imagined that he might some day have been the means of uniting them; and, besides the dispiriting conviction that thus, one by one, every hope to which she clung gave way, she could not help feeling painfully aware that it was Pelham's partiality to her, which had estranged her husband from him.

One evening at Almacks, Lady Saville, with whom she had gone, being engaged dancing, Emmeline had sought a refuge from the heat and crowd in the tea-room, and Pelham had followed her. Half serious, half jesting, he was attacking her upon the life she now led, and upon the impossibility of ever seeing her quietly, and the eternal hurry of pleasure and spirits in which he always found her.

"Why I only do like others," said Emmeline, with forced gaiety.

"Perhaps so," replied Pelham. "But you are not like those others whom you imitate and follow. I am sure that all this dissipation cannot satisfy *your* mind, cannot make *you* happy."

"*Perhaps* not," said Emmeline, her forced smile fading from her lips; for *happiness* was a word which always grated on her heart, and sounded harsh in her ears.

"But what can I do? —*Il faut hurler avec les loups*," added she, again endeavouring to resume her gaiety.

"This assumed levity cannot take me in," continued Pelham. "I am certain it is impossible but that all this frivolity and fatigue must wear out both your mind and body. How different you were at Arlingford! how little you then seemed to anticipate pleasure from what you now enter into so warmly!"

These were all home truths, which Emmeline could not answer, and she merely stammered out, that she had now no choice.

"Indeed!" replied Pelham, warmly. "You wrong your friends when you say that."

"My friends?" repeated Emmeline, sadly, "I have no friends to——" and she stopped short, her own words, rousing from the bottom of her heart painful feelings, which she in vain endeavoured to smother by dissipation; and which, by hiding them from others, she hoped to forget herself. She averted her head from Pelham, and fixed her tearful eyes on the ground.

Apparently fearful of going too far, Pelham was also silent; he looked at her with melancholy interest; he could not help observing how greatly she was altered, how much she had lost of the graceful roundness of her form, and how evidently

> "Concealment, like a worm in the bud,
> Fed on her damask cheek."

At that minute, Fitzhenry suddenly entered the room, and, hastily coming up to Pelham, "I have been looking for you this half hour," said he; "I want to speak to you for a minute."

Fitzhenry had spoken these words so quick that it was not till he ended, that the preoccupied look of his auditor seemed to strike him; his eyes glanced from him to Emmeline, and there remained fixed. His sudden entrance had brought the blood into her face, but could not dispel from it the traces of emotion which were very evident; and there was a contrast between the expression of her countenance, the listless neglect of her whole person, and the glittering trappings in which she was attired, that must have struck and interested any one; and which arrested her husband's attention so forcibly, that Emmeline blushed still deeper beneath his gaze.

This seemed to rouse him from the sort of dream in which

he appeared to be lost; and suddenly turning to Pelham, "I stopped at your house, and there learnt you were here; I had no idea you ever honoured such places with your presence when you could possibly help it."

"Sometimes, when the spirit moves me," answered Pelham, carelessly. "But what is it you have to say to me?"

"I have a message to you from the Speaker, with whom I have been dining," said Fitzhenry, as if suddenly recollecting his errand, and he drew Pelham aside for a minute. Emmeline then ventured to raise her eyes upon her husband, and could not help, with a sort of melancholy pride, comparing him to those around him, and exulting in his superiority of look, air, and manner. When his conversation with Pelham was over, he again turned towards Emmeline, and again his eyes were rivetted on her.

"You have left off dancing, I think, Lady Fitzhenry," said he, as if he thought it necessary to say something, and hardly knew what; "I thought you had liked it. Pelham, do you ever dance now?"

"It is some time since I was guilty of any thing so frisky," he replied. "I should be afraid I might be thought not behaving myself with proper diplomatic gravity; but as for Lady Fitzhenry, I must say that, in her, it is pure laziness, and therefore most reprehensible, for I have myself heard many a humble application made to her during this last half hour."

"We take to ourselves the right to be fanciful and capricious, you know," said Emmeline, trying to smile.

"Yes, and caprice is sometimes the only thing women are steady to," replied Fitzhenry; while an expression of satirical displeasure seemed to curl his handsome lip.

Emmeline felt she no way deserved that severe remark, and indeed hardly thought he ever noticed her enough even to observe the faults she might have. But in his manner, just

then, he was altogether so unlike himself, and had so much the appearance of offended ill humour, that she would have thought something particularly disagreeable had just passed between the two friends, except that she saw Pelham was, as indeed he was always, perfectly mild and composed.

At that moment a very pretty woman, dressed in the height of Parisian fashion, came into the room; and, after acknowledging Mr. Pelham with a familiar bow, addressed Fitzhenry.

"How basely you have deserted me, and forgotten our engagement. I have been looking for you every where. The waltz is nearly over."

"Ten thousand pardons," said Fitzhenry rather embarrassed: "I am quite ashamed, but really I had entirely forgotten."

"That does not mend the matter much," answered she, laughing, and glancing at Emmeline. "You have, I think, already forgotten your foreign gallantry;" and, taking the arm he offered, they both went into the dancing-room.

"Who is that?" said Emmeline eagerly, as she followed them with her eyes.

"It is Mrs. Osterley," replied Pelham. "She is a Vienna acquaintance of ours, and just returned from abroad."

Emmeline again breathed; but, complaining of the heat of the tea-room, got up and went towards the door. Mr. Pelham smiled on her in compassion as he drew her arm within his, and suffered her to lead him which way she chose, and they soon found themselves among the crowd of waltzers. Fitzhenry was then dancing with Mrs. Osterley, and when they stopped, it was close by Emmeline; though an intervening waltzing pair, also pausing in their giddy labours, hid her entirely from their view.

"Who was that you were talking to in the tea-room when I went to claim you so inconsiderately?" said Mrs. Osterley to her partner.

"Don't you know?" answered he, rather embarrassed by the question, or rather by the manner in which it was put; "it was Lady Fitzhenry."

"Lady Fitzhenry! your wife! you surprise me! what a very pretty woman she is! I had heard her so differently described; she is an uncommonly interesting looking person, *vraiment, je vous en fais mon compliment.*"

Fitzhenry bowed; and Emmeline could see that the mantling blood had tinged even his forehead.

"And from what I further heard," continued his gay companion, looking archly in his face, "I should have thought you were the last man to have been detected in a flirtation with your wife; though really, now I have seen her, I do not wonder she should have made you a little *volage.*"

"I had gone in search of Pelham," said Fitzhenry, coldly, apparently much disconcerted by her remark.

"Oh! is that the way of it?" retorted Mrs. Osterley laughing: "well, I really cannot pity you; it is but fair play, for you richly deserve it. But is Pelham really at last caught? Well, I shall be truly curious to become acquainted with the piece of perfection who has had power to overcome his impenetrable insensibility—pray do introduce me to *your wife.*" And she again laughed more heartily than before.

Fitzhenry did not, as she seemed to have expected, join in the laugh; and, with a smile of contempt, she added, "Surely *you* don't think it incumbent upon you to play the English husband and be angry, for that would be taking a very unnecessary degree of trouble, I should think."

Luckily, Pelham's attention had, during this conversation, been attracted another way, so that Emmeline had gently withdrawn her arm, and the crowd had soon divided them. Disgusted with Mrs. Osterley's levity, and fearful that Fitzhenry might perceive her, she drew back, although she would have given much to have heard his answer. She soon again

saw them in the giddy round, and went to a seat which she observed to be unoccupied.

She had not been there long, before Miss Selina Danvers flew up to her, with ecstasy in her looks, and a perfect parterre of flowers in her head, and seizing her hand vehemently,

"Well, my dear Lady Fitzhenry, here I am! actually at Almacks! and all owing to you, I ame sure, I am more obliged to you than I can express. What an enchanting place it is! But only think how abominably those odious lady patronesses have behaved! After all, mamma has no ticket! Did you ever hear any thing like it? It is quite atrocious. I really thought I should have died with anxiety when we came to Willis's room this morning to hear our fate; and my heart sank within me when I saw how full the street was of carriages, for we got into a regular string just like a ball—so delightful! We were there full an hour and a half waiting, but I am sure it was well worth while, and I really believe I screamed with joy when I saw my ticket; but as I said before, there was none for mamma; so then we had to drive all over the town to find a *chaperon* for me to go with; at last we went to Lady Coddrington, and only think! she had got one for herself, and none for her daughter! Did you ever hear any thing so shocking! And she was so cross and sulky about it at first, that she said she would not go; but by abusing the lady patronesses, we got her into good-humour, and she agreed to take me; but, between ourselves, she is a very disagreeable *chaperon*; for out of spite, I suppose, because her ugly daughter could not get a ticket, she won't try and get me a partner; and, odious woman, she came so late that the evening is already more than half over. I suppose you know all the men here, Lady Fitzhenry, don't you?"

"Very few dancers," said Emmeline, not feeling at all inclined to press Selina on any of her acquaintance.

"Dear! there is Mr. Moore!" exclaimed the young lady,

already in a flutter of expectation; "and I do believe he is coming this way; and we danced constantly together at Arlingford, you know."

That was true; but dancing and diverting himself with the simple Selina at Arlingford, and selecting her as his partner at Almacks, were two very different things; and after making her a distant, chilling bow, Mr. Moore sat down on the other side of Emmeline. Poor Selina's countenance fell. Moore went on talking, *sotto-voce*, to Emmeline, till Selina could bear it no longer.

"Dear, Mr. Moore! how come you not to be dancing? I thought you liked it of all things!"

"I may ask you the same question," returned he.

"Oh no, perhaps nobody has asked me," answered Selina, pettishly.

"That is quite impossible; I will not suppose any thing so disgraceful to the taste and judgment of all the smart young gentlemen I see here," added he, carelessly, and then returned to his affectedly interesting conversation with Emmeline, who listened apparently quite unworthy of the honour conferred on her. Selina saw with mortification that nothing was to be hoped from Mr. Moore. But just then, a foppishly dressed young man, coming up and speaking to Emmeline, Selina's spirits revived: she touched her arm, whispering, "Who is that? could you introduce me to him?" At first Emmeline paid no attention. But Selina's pinches became so urgent, that she at last was obliged to say: "Lord William Vernon, will you allow me to introduce my friend, Miss Danvers, to you?"

For a minute, an expression of displeasure animated Lord William's unmeaning countenance: he made Selina a slight bow with his head, as he took a hasty survey of her person; and after saying something very uninteresting about the heat of the room, to Emmeline, and enlarging on the merits of a newly purchased cabriolet-horse, to Moore, he walked away.

Poor Selina bit her lip in vexation, and finding she did not thrive at all in her present situation, jumped up to see what could be done with her cross *chaperon*, whom she had spied in conversation with a gentleman at the opposite side of the room.

"How in the name of wonder came Miss Danvers here?" exclaimed Moore, as soon as she had left them—"what could possess the lady patronesses to give her a ticket?"

"I applied for one for her," answered Emmeline.

"I think that was rather a work of supererogation on your part," continued Moore. "You surely are not going to hamper yourself with that girl: you soon frightened away Vernon, trembling for his newly acquired dignity in the hierarchy of fashion; and I must give you notice, if you take to introducing Miss Selina Danvers about, even you, even Lady Fitzhenry, charming as she is, will be voted a bore. What business has that sort of girl here? and how can she be so unreasonable as to expect to be asked to dance? it is perfect nonsense—she had much better stick to her Hampshire county ball; there she may play *un grand rôle*. Misses are really sad nuisances in society, unless they sit quiet, and don't trouble one; so take my advice, Lady Fitzhenry. Good-nature is quite *mauvais ton* in London—it is a bad style to take up, and will never do. But it is impossible to sit still and moralize when Collinet is playing that waltz so delightfully; will you take a turn or two with me?"

"I will resign the honour to Miss Danvers," said Emmeline, laughing—"and luckily she is just coming this way; so do the thing handsomely, and ask the poor girl, for she knows nobody here, and is dying to dance."

"Oh, if you are really serious, I am off," said Moore, and hastily seizing his hat, which he had hid under the seat in preparation for his waltz with Lady Fitzhenry, he hurried away.

Although little inclined to merriment, Emmeline could not

help laughing—the smile on her countenance caught Pelham's eye, and he came up to her to enquire what had amused her. Emmeline told Selina's sad tale.

"Poor thing!" said Pelham. "But this is a new character Moore has taken up, I think, for he set out much more wisely, with the determination to enjoy every amusement that came in his way, professing openly a love for dancing and gaiety of every kind: but fashion, or what is called, in its slang, *being fine*, is so catching a disease that none can escape. It has taken the place of the small-pox; and I think it would be a good plan if we could be inoculated for it, so as to secure having it mildly, and of the best sort. I don't know how *you* manage to be *what* and *where* you are in the world without it; but pray don't follow Moore's advice on the subject—let us have *one* specimen of a good-natured London fine lady. By the bye, I too have some advice to give you, which is, not to make up to that Mrs. Osterley: she was reckoned at Vienna *a très-mauvaise langue*, and was always making *tracasseries*. She has a gay, and apparently an artless manner, which at first takes one in. Fitzhenry never liked her, so you need not be acquainted with her; and I should really counsel you to avoid her."

There was little necessity to give Emmeline that caution: what she had already heard, had not prepossessed her in Mrs. Osterley's favour in any way; but at that minute, the two people of whom they were talking came up.

"Mrs. Osterley begs to be introduced to you, Lady Fitzhenry," said her husband, with an evident painful embarrassment of manner. Emmeline got up, and returned the salutation, though with a coldness which she could not overcome, but which did not seem at all to discompose the person to whom it was addressed.

"As an old friend of Lord Fitzhenry's," continued Mrs. Osterley, "I feel I have a right to claim acquaintance with you, and I trust you will allow me to endeavour to improve it."

And she seated herself by Emmeline, who again bowed in silence; for never before had she felt so totally at a loss for some of those usual phrases which mean nothing, but which fill up the awkward pause, apt to take place after a first introduction; and Fitzhenry no way helped her. He appeared to be completely discomposed; and, under pretence of seeing an acquaintance, removed to a distance. Mrs. Osterley finding Emmeline did not speak, continued:—

"It is so long since I have been in England, that I hardly know any one: quite a new set and generation have started up; and my *English* acquaintances are merely those whom I have known abroad—by the bye, Mr. Pelham, are the Mostyns in town?"

"I believe they have left it," said he, coldly.

"Of course you know them," continued Mrs. Osterley to Emmeline—"Mr. Mostyn is so particular a friend of Lord Fitzhenry's."

"No, I have never met them," answered Emmeline, commanding her voice as well as she could, though she felt her face was to a great degree betraying her feelings.

"You surprise me," continued her tormenter. "But I suppose you and my friend Lord Fitzhenry have been ruralizing, and sentimentalizing alone in the county, *à la mode Anglaise*, since your marriage, and I cannot wonder at either of you preferring that to the most agreeable society," added she, with a complimentary smile. "After Easter, I suppose every body will be in town; and I trust Lady Florence will then return among the number, for I really feel quite in a strange country. I am now so little used to the forms, and cold, stiff proprieties of English ways, that, to tell the truth, I find London very dull and stupid, and was really delighted to-night, when I saw Lord Fitzhenry, to talk over delightful foreign days with him. Mr. Pelham, don't you find English society much changed for the worse? I think my country folks are pleasanter anywhere than in their own land; for,

here they directly put on their native buckram again, and are so prodigiously good and proper, that there is no living with them."

"I can't agree with you," replied Pelham. "I am so stupid, as to like them better at home: abroad, they are too apt to cast off some of the restraints which the opinions of their own country oblige them to submit to, without adopting those of the nations they visit. In short, the case is the same with manners as with religion;—they cease to be protestants without becoming catholics; and they take advantage of the usual laxity of morals and principles of other countries, without acquiring that outward decorum of manner, which at least prevents such conduct from offending the innocent; without, in short, adopting that excusable hypocrisy, which a French author so justly calls *l'hommage que le vice rend à la vertu*, an English woman rarely ceases to be virtuous without becoming coarse; a foreigner may understand *le metier* better, but my own opinion is—that there are few of my countrywomen much the better for a long residence on the Continent."

"The present company always excepted, of course," said Mrs. Osterley, bowing to him. "Mr. Pelham is no complimenter, as I dare say you find, Lady Fitzhenry; for I believe you have the pleasure of being intimately acquainted with him."

Fortunately for Emmeline, a new waltz just then began; and Fitzhenry, to make up for his former negligence, came again to claim Mrs. Osterley as his partner, although seemingly against his will. As they went away together, Emmeline heard her say to Fitzhenry—

"I am not sure I admire your Lady Fitzhenry so much on nearer view as I did at first sight. She is terribly *English*; so cold and distant—and I see already she dislikes me for being the reverse; *et que je n'ai pas l'honneur de lui plaire.*"

What Fitzhenry replied, Emmeline did not hear; and, as it was now late, and that she was wearied both in body and mind, she begged of Pelham to ask for her carriage, desiring him to tell Lady Saville she would send it back for her, if she had not ordered her own.

They crossed the room in silence: poor Emmeline taking one last look of Fitzhenry, as he was still waltzing with Mrs. Osterley.

"That is a spiteful little devil," said Pelham, who well knew whither Emmeline's eyes had wandered; "and I again advise you to keep clear of her; she hates both Fitzhenry and me; for, the truth is, she tried to turn both our heads alternately, and succeeded with neither: Fitzhenry had too much good taste to be taken in by any thing so glaring."

Emmeline made no comment, but sighed deeply. Her sigh was echoed by one close to her; and, turning round, she saw poor Selina, cloaked up to her ears, following her hard-hearted *chaperon* down the stairs which she had so lately mounted in such glee; the evening to which she had looked forward so long, with so much ecstasy, already over—and having to her been productive of nothing but mortification and disappointment.

"Good night, Lady Fitzhenry," said she, sadly:—"for you see I am going: but I am sure I don't care; there is nobody here one knows, and though it is a ball, nobody *will* dance: it is the oddest thing I ever saw. However, it is very well to come once, just to be able to say one has been at Almacks, for that sounds well; but I declare I think it the stupidest place I ever was at, and I wonder how people can make such a fuss about it."

The loud welcome cry of "Lady Fitzhenry's carriage stops the way," prevented any more of Selina's peevishness being heard, and Emmeline returned to her solitary home. But harmless, unpresuming, and innocent as she was, in absenting herself, she had left her character behind her; and from

that evening (thanks to Mrs. Osterley), all London talked of and laughed at the decided *affair* between Lady Fitzhenry and Mr. Pelham; each narrator telling his own story, and inventing such facts as each found wanting to render it plausible. Emmeline, however, lost nothing in the good opinion of the fashionable world by this report, which was treated, by some, as an excellent joke; by others, as a thing of course; and many of those who thus carelessly discussed the matter, and at once deprived poor Emmeline of her good name, might have ended their remarks, if they had had honest consciences, with Lady Saville's first words of praise to Emmeline: "She is really quite on a par with ourselves."

## CHAPTER VIII.

Now, in his turn, offended and surprised,
The knight in silence from her side withdrew;
With pain she marked it, but her pain disguised,
And heedless seemed her journey to pursue,
Nor backward deigned to him one anxious view,
As oft she wished.

*Psyche.*

Easter was now fast approaching, and Fitzhenry announced to Emmeline his intention of going out of town for a fortnight,—but not to Arlingford. And he concluded by saying, that, of course, he supposed she would like to pass the time with her father at Charlton.

At any other time, and under any other circumstances, how gladly would she have availed herself of the opportunity of returning to her former, peaceful, happy home! But, like a sick person, her feverish mind had for some time past dwelt on Arlingford. She longed to find herself again there, for there, they *must* meet—there they *might* be alone! and she

could not help hoping for some explanation between them, which might make her, at least, less miserable. Fitzhenry's manner towards her had of late changed: it had no longer the ease of indifference, the coldness of mere civility; but, alas! it had only changed to apparent dislike, or at least displeasure. He observed her more; but his observations seemed always to prejudice him still more against her.

And yet, what could she do? or what leave undone? She had tried all means to please him, and all had failed. She first had followed the dictates of her own heart, and then, relying on Pelham's knowledge of her husband's character, and on his advice, she had played a part most unnatural to her—that of a gay, unfeeling woman of the world, when her heart was breaking. All, in turn, seemed to be wrong.

For an instant, a horrid thought had crossed her mind. Could Pelham be deceiving her? Could he, for any view, either of his own, or Fitzhenry's, be endeavouring to draw her on to what was lowering her still more in her husband's opinion? Was Pelham untrue to his friend? or what would be still worse, was it a concerted plan, to exasperate her, and at last to force her to break a connexion, which, to her husband, had become intolerable thraldom. Emmeline, shuddering, turned away from such thoughts, almost reproaching herself for ingratitude in having, even for a moment, entertained them. But again disappointed in what she had looked to with some degree of satisfaction, and finding she must relinquish even those faint hopes which she had built, on their return to Arlingford, her sick mind preyed on itself, and conjured up these painful surmises, producing doubt and suspicion in the most confiding of all characters.

Emmeline heard Fitzhenry's notification about leaving town in silent acquiescence; and, having no choice, to Charlton she went; but her heart sank within her as she drove up to her father's door, for, aware of how much she was changed, she dreaded her parents' observation, and feared, that when

constantly in their society, she could not keep up those false spirits which she always endeavoured to assume when with them. Poor Emmeline was in truth sadly changed. Instead of the active, cheerful being she used to be, she was now generally abstracted, and sometimes even apparently totally insensible to every thing around her; and then, at others, when fearful of betraying herself, she suddenly broke forth into those unnatural bursts of feverish spirits, so painful to witness, because so evidently proceeding from internal suffering.

Mrs. Benson watched her in silent anxiety; but her loss of bloom, of activity, and appetite, even of spirits, all was attributed to a far different cause; and, after some enquiries respecting her health, which Emmeline always evaded, the warm-hearted mother, not without smiling at her daughter's over-strained shyness and delicacy, questioned her no more on the subject; but contented herself with paying every possible attention to her bodily comfort, while she indulged in the delightful anticipation of new objects for her maternal pride and fondness.

And thus deceived as to the cause of Emmeline's altered appearance, she spared her any more embarrassing conversations.

The stated fortnight was past, and still she did not receive from Fitzhenry the promised letter, announcing his return to town. But one day the servant put into her hand one with the Arlingford post-mark. It was not franked by Fitzhenry; the writing was unknown to her; and, in alarm, she hastily broke the seal.

She found it was from Brown, the housekeeper, informing her that Reynolds had been seized with a violent and dangerous illness; that the doctors, who attended him, gave little hope of his recovery; and that he so constantly expressed his anxiety to see her, and Lord Fitzhenry, that she could not help complying with his request, and informing her la-

dyship of his situation and wishes. She added—"I have also taken the liberty to write to my lord; and not knowing where his lordship is, have sent the letter to the steward in town to forward to him."

Emmeline knew but too well whither the letter would follow him; but thinking he might not receive it in time, or that, possibly, in the society he then was, he might be little inclined to attend such a summons, she determined immediately to go to Arlingford. How much the desire of being there, of visiting every spot, every inanimate object in her mind connected with Fitzhenry, and the possibility even of thus meeting him, might have influenced her benevolent decision —probably she herself did not know.

On arriving at Arlingford, Emmeline's first question was, whether Lord Fitzhenry was there: and the feeling of deep disappointment with which she learnt that he was not, and that he was not even expected, betraying to herself her real object in coming, made her half-ashamed when at length she enquired after the poor invalid.

The accounts of Reynold's situation had been in no way exaggerated. He was still alive, and sensible; but there was no possibility whatever of recovery. Emmeline therefore endeavoured to overcome her own selfish feelings, and went immediately to the sick room.

Independent of the gratification she received from witnessing the pleasure which her presence seemed to give to the faithful old servant, the duty she undertook then was one every way better suited to her present state of mind, than the dissipation in which she had been lately engaged. It soothed and quieted the tumult of her feelings, and brought back to her mind some of the innocent, calm remembrances of happier days. Educated by her mother in the exercise of every religious duty, she, who had so lately been seen glittering in ball rooms, now knelt by the bed of sickness; and while raising the dying man's mind and hopes to that better world to

which he was hastening she found herself strengthened to bear the sorrows of that, in which she was still appointed to suffer.

Towards the end of the second day after Emmeline's arrival at Arlingford, Reynolds grew rapidly worse; the symptoms of death seemed to be fast increasing, and, aware of his approaching dissolution, his anxiety for Fitzhenry's arrival, and the nervous perturbation of his mind, were painful to witness. Emmeline frequently asked if he had any request to make, any wish she could communicate to him; but his only answer was, that he must see him before he died.

To compose, and turn his thoughts to other things, Emmeline had again recourse to religion; and, when thus employed, and while the last rays of the evening sun shone faintly through the curtains of the sick room on her kneeling figure, and on the sacred book she held in her hand, the door of the apartment slowly opened, and Fitzhenry appeared.

He started back on seeing Emmeline, and, for a moment, stood still, as if awed by the scene before him; but Reynolds recognizing him, and exclaiming—"'Tis him! God be praised, I shall now die in peace," Fitzhenry hastened up to him, kindly taking his extended hand; then again looking at Emmeline—" Good God! Lady Fitzhenry, since when have you been here?"

"Only a day or two; I was sent for," said Emmeline, hardly knowing whether thus unexpectedly seeing her had given him pain or pleasure.

" I was so bold as to send for her ladyship," said Reynolds. " It was my request, my dying request. I knew I had not long to live. I knew I should not die easy, unless I could once more see you, once more see that angel!" and still grasping Fitzhenry with one hand, he held out the other to Emmeline.

At such a moment, not to comply with any wish of the sick man, was impossible; though, half fearful of his intention, she tremblingly put her hand in his.

"Dear, dear Lord Fitzhenry," continued Reynolds, "you know I love you as if you were my own son. Death makes us all equal, and it makes me bold. I have often wished, longed, to speak to you, but felt it was not my place; and I had not courage; but listen to a dying man's advice. I know all—you know I do. Oh, my dear master! repent, and turn from your evil ways! Do not any longer trifle with God, and with the happiness he has offered you! Do not cast from you the angel Heaven has sent you;"—and he joined their hands. "God of heaven!" he continued, with a trembling voice, "look down on these, thy servants, and make them happy together!"

Fitzhenry's head fell on the bed, as if wishing to avoid the eyes of Emmeline, as he involuntarily sunk on his knees.

As for Emmeline, overcome and terrified at what had passed; fearful as to the manner in which Fitzhenry might interpret such a seemingly premeditated appeal to his feelings in her behalf; perhaps, even humbled at the situation in which it placed her, she hastily, almost unconsciously, withdrew her hand from the feeble grasp of the dying man, while his dimmed eyes were still raised to heaven; and, before either he, or her husband, had time to discover her intention, she hastily left the room.

But she had no sooner quitted it than she repented her hasty flight. When Reynolds joined their hands, although Fitzhenry had not clasped hers in token of affection, still he had suffered his to remain with it; and overcome by the old man's address to him, he appeared to have given way to the kind—the virtuous impulse of the moment. That impulse, and those virtuous feelings, might possibly have produced a favourable explanation; and she, by leaving him so

abruptly, had now, she feared, evidently shown a reluctance to any thing which might have produced a reconciliation between them.

Twice she had her hand on the lock to return; but, timid from excess of affection, each time her courage failed her.

The door which she had scarcely closed, reopened of itself, and she heard these words uttered by Fitzhenry: "It is impossible—indeed it can't be so;—but depend upon it, nothing shall be wanting on my part to contribute to her happiness, and——"

Emmeline waited for no more. As one pursued by a horrid vision, she hurried to her own room The shades of evening deepened around her, as, alone and half stupified, with her various feelings, she counted the striking of the heavy hours as they passed. Not a sound was to be heard in the uninhabited house—no one came near her.

At length, when the clock slowly, solemnly sounded twelve, she started up, and, recollecting that her maid was probably waiting for her, she rung the bell, that she might dismiss her for the night; but she first sent her to enquire after Reynolds, whose room was in a distant part of the building. On the return of Jenkins, the report she brought was—"That my lord was still with Reynolds—that they were apparently engaged in serious conversation—for that no one was allowed to go into the room, my lord himself giving him the necessary medicines, and having dismissed the nurse."

After her maid had taken off Emmeline's gown, unplaited her hair, and, at her desire, lit the fire in her dressing-room, as she fancied it would be a sort of companion to her, which, in her present state of mind, she felt to be necessary, she sent Jenkins to bed, and, drawing her chair close upon the hearth, Emmeline remained lost in reflections neither cheering nor soothing. The near neighbourhood of a death-bed gives an awful feeling even to one in the full pride of youth and health. To be aware that so close to us a fellow-creature is probably

just then passing, through the agonies of death, to that eternity to which we all look with awe, is an overpowering sensation; and Emmeline shuddered as these thoughts crossed her mind. She cast her eyes fearfully round the room, and endeavoured to brighten the flame in the grate. Still death and its horrors hung over her imagination, which wandered now to future scenes of pain and punishment; and the thought that Fitzhenry—her loved Fitzhenry, who had wound himself round every fibre of her heart—might perhaps be an outcast from that heaven to which she had been taught to look, as the end and aim of her existence, was agony. For she could not conceal from herself that he was living in bold defiance, or rather in total disregard and indifference to the will and laws of his God.

Emmeline's blood curdled, and a cold shiver crept all over her frame. Instinctively she sunk on her knees, and prayed from him who had never been taught to pray for himself. Her head sank on her clasped hands, which rested on a chair beside her; her long hair falling over her face and shoulders. The dead silence that surrounded her, appalled her awe-stricken mind; she eagerly listened for some sound of human existence and neighbourhood; but nothing was to be heard but the regular vibration of the great clock in the hall. Emmeline remained kneeling, till her nervous agitation grew so painfully strong, that she hardly dared to move, and had not power to shake off the superstitious horror which had taken possession of her. Every limb trembled; the cold sweat stood on her forehead; and it was an inexpressible relief to her disordered mind, when, at length, she heard a slow step in the gallery, and a gentle knock at her door. She concluded it was her maid, bringing her some tidings of Reynolds, and she quickly and joyfully bade her enter. The door softly opened, and Fitzhenry appeared.

An unearthly vision could scarcely have startled Emmeline more. She uttered an exclamation, almost of terror, as she

hastily rose from her knees; but almost directly sank into the chair beside her, her trembling limbs refusing to support her.

"I think you gave me leave to come in," said Fitzhenry, still standing at the door. Emmeline bowed assent, when, closing it after him, he came up to her, and put his candle on the mantle-piece.

It was the first time he had ever entered her room since that day when, on her parent's first arrival at Arlingford, he had conducted them to it; and, dreading the possible purport of his visit *now*, after the scene that had lately occurred, she had not courage to say a word. For a minute, both were silent—at length Fitzhenry said—

"I thought you would be anxious to hear about poor Reynolds; and as he has now sunk into something like sleep, I came away for a minute to tell you he is more easy and composed; but I fear this stupor is only the forerunner of death, and that all will soon be over. I shall lose a most faithful servant—indeed, an attached friend—."

He paused; but Emmeline, still too nervous to speak, said nothing.

"I also came," said he, in an agitated, hurried manner, "to thank you for your kindness in coming to him: it was most kind—good—excellent;—like yourself. I feel it deeply, I assure you, as well as Reynolds."

These few words of praise, so unlike what she had expected from him after what had passed, still more overpowered Emmeline. Had she dared to give way to the feelings of the moment, she would have thrown herself into her husband's arms, and, in his tenderness, claimed a reward for an action which he seemed to take as a kindness to himself. But alas! not for one moment could she be deceived as to the nature of *his* feelings; not for one moment, after the decisive declaration which she had again heard him make, could she attribute his present manner towards her to any thing but mere gratitude for her attentions to his old servant; and, repressing the

throbbings of her bosom, and scarcely knowing what she said, with a breathless voice she answered :

"I came to Arlingford because I thought Brown's letter might not reach you in time, and I did not know where to write to you—I mean, I thought you might be otherwise engaged yourself."—And then struck with the appearance of coldness and reproof in her words, and the possible interpretation to be given to them, she stopped short.

Fitzhenry made no comment. Both were now standing seemingly occupied with watching the dying embers of the fire—at last he turned towards her, she felt his eyes were on her.

"Poor Reynolds often names you," he said; "but I think, unless you wish it—perhaps you had better not go to him again—such scenes are painful, and——"

He was continuing, but with the quick touchiness of love (of unrequited love, which interprets every thing to its disadvantage), Emmeline, catching at those words, and fancying they alluded to what had lately passed, and were meant as a hint to her to avoid any possible recurrence of the same scene, immediately, with a voice scarcely audible from agitation, said:

"Oh no, certainly. And perhaps now that you are here, and that my presence is no longer desired—I mean not necessary—it may be more convenient if I return to Charlton —— or to town."

"Just whatever you prefer," said Fitzhenry, coldly; and, after a moment's pause, "you know my wish is, that you should always do whatever you like and judge to be best." And he put up his hand to take his candle, as if in preparation to leave the room.

Poor Emmeline had, in a moment of perhaps excusable irritation, artfully made the proposal of leaving Arlingford, in the hope of its being opposed; and this cold acquiescence quite overcame her. She could not speak, for her lips quivered when she attempted it; and, depressed and nervous

with all that had passed, big tears again rolled down her cheeks, and she kept her head averted to conceal them from Fitzhenry.

In raising his hand to take his candle, he somehow had caught on the button of his coat-sleeve a lock of her long hair, which was hanging loose over her shoulders; and, during the pause that followed his answer, he was endeavouring to disentangle himself; but in vain. Surprised at his still remaining near her, and in silence, she at last looked up, and seeing what had happened, her trembling hands darted on the entangled hair, and with the vehemence of vexation, she broke and untwisted it till she again set him free. He looked at her for a minute in seeming astonishment, and then, coldly wishing her good-night, left the room.

He had scarcely been gone a minute, when recalling the kindness of his manner on first entering, and blaming herself for the irritation she had given way to, she determined to recall him; and, passing from one extreme to another, and buoyed up with instant hope—though she scarcely knew of what—she hastily collected her hair with a comb, folded her wrapper closer around her, and opening her door, hurried into the gallery. All there was dark and silent; she turned towards Fitzhenry's room—his door was open—but he was gone! Stopping a minute to listen and take breath, she heard him crossing the hall below on his way to Reynolds's apartment. She determined to recall him, and hurried along the gallery to the head of the stairs for that purpose. When she got there, she saw the last faint ray of the light he was carrying glimmering across the hall. Twice she endeavoured to pronounce his name—but it was a name that never could be pronounced by her calmly. She was frightened at the sound of her own voice, faint as its accents were (so faint that they never reached him to whom they were addressed), and her courage totally failed her.

"Alas!" thought she, as she sadly leant against the ban-

nisters for support, "if he came, what could I say to him? what have I to ask of him, but pity for feelings which he can neither understand nor return? and may I at least never so far forget myself. I am humbled enough already." And now, even alarmed at what those feelings had so nearly betrayed her into, she returned to her own room as hastily as she had a minute before quitted it; so capricious, so inconsistent does passion render its victims.

Towards dawn of day, Emmeline, whose heavy eyes sleep had never visited, heard a bustle below; several doors were hastily opened and shut. In a little time, Fitzhenry (for she could never mistake *his* step) passed hastily along the gallery to his own room, and closed the door immediately after him. Then there was again a dead silence.

"It is all over," thought Emmeline; "Reynolds is at peace: the only being in this house who loved me is gone!" A cold shiver crept over her; she buried her tear-bedewed face in her pillow, and thus lay for long immoveable, no conscious thought passing through her agitated mind.

When her maid came to her in the morning, she informed her Reynolds had died about five o'clock; that Lord Fitzhenry had never left him; that he had supported him in his arms to the last, and, when all was over, appearing much affected, he had gone immediately to his own room, giving orders that no one was to go to him till he rung.

Jenkins, unbidden, brought Emmeline her breakfast in her own apartment, although at Arlingford that was a meal at which she and Fitzhenry had always hitherto met. How painfully did she then feel the separation between them! Fitzhenry was in sorrow, and she, his wife, dared not go near him; even the servants seemed to dictate to her her conduct, and to be aware of her situation.

As to her departure, she knew not what to determine. She had said she would go. Her husband had not opposed her declared intention, and she did not like again to be accused

of caprice. Not feeling, however, that she could leave Arlingford without at least again seeing him, she put off her journey till the following day.

To pass the slow unoccupied hours, Emmeline, knowing there was no chance of seeing Fitzhenry for some time, wandered out. The country was now in its first freshness of beauty—all smiled around her. Those rides and paths which, the summer before, she had first seen, with Fitzhenry at her side, were again clothed in the lovely green of spring. Often at those spots, connected in her mind with some circumstance, word or even look of Fitzhenry, which a few months back had, although in delusion, made her heart sometimes beat with the flattering hope that she was not quite indifferent to him, poor Emmeline would remain fixed, quite unconscious of the time she thus passed in vague reverie. For, compared with what she had endured in London, there was a sort of pleasure in her present state of mind, raised and soothed as it had been, by the late pious duties in which she had been engaged, and softened by the charm of renovated nature. How often does some accidental sound or perfume, wafted to us on a spring breeze, startle the mind by confused recollections of hours gone by, and by undefinable sensations of mixed pain and pleasure!

Emmeline had not been long returned to the house before a servant came and told her that dinner was ready, and that my lord was waiting for her. Their meeting was rather awkward on both sides, Fitzhenry never raised his eyes upon her, but she was now well used to that sort of cold neglect on his part. It was the first time for several months that they had been *tête-à-tête.* This circumstance, and the room they were in, all brought back forcibly to Emmeline's mind their wedding-day; that day of exultation and joy to her parents, and at its dawn of hope and happiness even to herself—and how had it all ended!

To one formed for tenderness, for all the social charities

of life, there could not be a more cheerless fate than hers; for, repulsed from where her heart should have found its best home, she was even denied the consolations of confidential friendship. Occupied with these thoughts, Emmeline was little inclined to join in uninteresting, forced conversation. Fitzhenry, too, seemed much depressed, and they eat their repast in nearly total silence.

When it was ended, Fitzhenry, under the plea of having several orders to give, and many things to arrange in consequence of the death of Reynolds, soon returned to his own room, and Emmeline passed the remainder of the evening alone. On the approach of midnight, as he never appeared, she concluded that Fitzhenry did not intend to return; she therefore rang for her candle, and left the drawing-room; but before she reached her own apartment, she was met in the gallery by her husband—they both stopped.

"I shall leave this place to-morrow," said Emmeline, in a low voice. "Have you any letters or orders to send by me?" she still fondly hoped he would make some objection to her departure; but he merely replied that he concluded she was going to Grosvenor-Street; that he would follow in a few days; and that if she did not set out early, he would send some letters by her.

"I can go at any hour," said Emmeline, "I am in no hurry; it does not signify at what time I go; all hours are the same to me." And so they parted.

It was in the same cold, distant manner that they separated next morning, when Emmeline left Arlingford for town. For though she loitered on, always hoping Fitzhenry would let fall some word at which she might catch as an encouragement to stay, he never in any manner opposed her departure; and at last, with a heavy heart she entered her carriage, and after a melancholy, solitary journey, drove over London's noisy pavement, now glazed by a burning May sun, into Grosvenor-Street.

Those who have lived in London when melancholy circumstances have excluded them from participating in its amusements, will enter into Emmeline's feelings when, during the first, and on many an ensuing dismal evening, which she spent alone, she heard the carriages hurry past her door in the constant bustle of pleasure. Often, as she sat in the dusk of the now long-protracted spring evenings, Emmeline was only roused from some deep reverie to a consciousness of the lateness of the hour, by the glare of the lamps and flambeaux of some of these gay equipages passing her darkened windows, and hastening to some general resort of diversion.

For it was now the high tide, the carnival of London. Every one was there—and every one went every where—hurrying and crowding after each other, although caring for no one. What a wretched, humiliating picture of human nature does London present during the months of May, June, and July! Affection, friendship, all the social virtues and charities, disappear before folly, dissipation, and selfishness. And so infectious is the disease, that almost the best hearts are, at least for the moment, tainted; the steadiest heads turned. It is a constant hurry, a perpetual bustle, in which no one has leisure to care, or feel for another, whatever may be the inclination; and scarcely is there time to drop a tear over the grave of a friend. If an uncle, cousin, or some such near relation, is so inconsiderate as to choose these interesting, busy moments to depart this life, it is looked upon as an almost unpardonable act of selfishness on the part of the defunct, by which so much time, perhaps many entertainments and balls, are lost to his surviving family. On the other hand, the demise of some mere nightly companion in the resorts of dissipation is generally hailed with joy, not for their own demerits, but that not only *their* opera-box and ticket at Almacks, but that of all those nearly connected with them will thereby become disposable; a short retirement being considered necessary both to dry their tears, and give time to a

fashionable tailor or mantua-maker to send home the becoming mourning, in which they can again sally forth to make up for the time they have lost, by returning with renovated spirits to their dissipated duties. In the mean time, anxious notes fly about town as soon as the death is announced in the papers; and the doors of all the patronesses of fashion are beset by the dear friends of the deceased, anxious to be the first to apply for the vacated subscription, which happily can neither be carried away from this world by the selfish, nor be disposed of by will by the obliging.

And this was the world into which poor Emmeline had to carry a breaking heart!

After Fitzhenry had joined her in town, although nothing further had ever passed,—no dispute, no difference had taken place,—yet they appeared mutually to consider themselves as more than ever, in short, totally estranged.

Both looked miserable: an additional shade of melancholy seemed to have gathered on Lord Fitzhenry's countenance; and yet Emmeline was now certain that her rival was again in town, and that he passed with Lady Florence those hours which she now spent alone in Grosvenor-Street. For Emmeline felt it impossible to return to her former life; and, as there was no reason why she should, no one for whom she was called upon to make the exertion, she gave up what had already injured her health, both of mind and body.

Emmeline's temper even was not what it used to be; often, if Fitzhenry accidentally spoke to her, she answered him with asperity, and then the minute he had disappeared, she wept bitterly for her fault—for her offence towards love; longing for his return, that, on her knees, she might implore his forgiveness. Yet when they again met, it was the same repulsive coldness on both sides.

But if there can ever be an excuse for one gifted by nature with the blessing of a mild, gentle disposition, for giving way to irritation, Emmeline might plead it. Her heart was every

way wounded; even Pelham she now dreaded; Mrs. Osterley's hints eternally haunted her : if she caught his eye fixed upon her in anxious interest, her sick fancy took alarm, and the deep crimson in her cheeks betrayed apprehensions, which she wished to conceal even from herself.

Tormented with this idea, she now shunned his society and conversation, as much as she had formerly sought it; for, although her extreme diffidence with regard to her own attractions (a diffidence which her husband's disregard of her had much increased), her unsuspecting innocence, and simplicity of heart, would rather have led her to prize than avoid the attentions of an agreeable man, regardless of their raising suspicions in the breast of others, any more than in her own; yet, now being aware of what the world *could* and *did* say, that very innocence and simplicity made her fly from the least appearance of evil. She was not one of those to play off on a husband the arts of infidelity, in order, by jealousy, to rouse his feelings, and by the fear of wounded honour, to attract his attentions towards her.

Fitzhenry cared not for her; but the vow of constancy which her lips had pronounced at the altar, and which was since engraven by strong affection on her heart, was too sacred in her estimation to allow even the uninterested world to suspect that she trifled with it.

Her intercourse with Pelham being thus embittered, and her parents being the last to whom she could reveal her sorrows, she dragged on, in wretched solitude of heart, a listless, useless, aimless existence. The young, the gay, and the busy meantime bustled around her, careless of her unhappiness; or, if they sometimes observed its melancholy symptoms on her pale cheek, or in her heavy, absent eye, they only wondered "what could make Lady Fitzhenry so discontented, when she possessed every thing in the world to render her happy."

It is thus we too often pass harsh and hasty judgment on those whose grave or suffering countenances chance to cross

us in the paths of pleasure, checking, for a minute, by their sad and therefore unwelcome presence, our feeling of enjoyment, in reminding us, most disagreeably, of its transient nature.

## CHAPTER IX.

Poured in soft dalliance at a lady's feet,
In fondest rapture he appeared to lie. . . .
Their words she heard not—words had ne'er exprest
What well her sickening fancy could supply—
All that their silent eloquence confest
As breathed the sigh of fire from each impassioned breast.
While thus she gazed, her quivering lips turn pale,
Contending passions rage within her breast,
Nor ever had she known such bitter bale,
Or felt by such fierce agony opprest.

*Psyche.*

Emmeline having a general invitation to the house of Lady Mowbray—one of her new acquaintance, who was *at-home* on a stated day every week; and never having yet been to any of her *soirées*, she one evening exerted herself to pay her a visit. There were not many people assembled, owing to the *many things to be done*, a phrase in the fashionable slang of London, expressive of that delightful prospect of busy pleasure, which consists in passing the greatest part of the night in a carriage, fighting in and out of a dozen houses, the owners of which are, perhaps, never seen by their visitors.

Among the few whom these many pleasures had that evening spared to Lady Mowbray, Emmeline found none with whom she was much acquainted; so that after having remained what she thought a sufficient time, hearing a loud knock, announcing a fresh reinforcement of company, and thinking she had performed her duty of civility, she meditated

her departure, when the door opened, and Lady Florence Mostyn was announced.

At that name Emmeline started so violently, that her neighbour turned round to see what had alarmed her; but could neither perceive any cause for her agitation, nor receive any answer to her enquiries, whether she was well, for Emmeline's eyes, thoughts, and every sense, were fixed on her rival.

Lady Florence, after speaking to one or two other people, went up to Lady Mowbray, and seated herself by her, luckily at some distance from where Emmeline was placed. Lady Florence was past the first bloom and beauty of youth; but this was more apparent in the somewhat thickened contour of her figure, than in her face. Her deep blue eyes were still brilliant; her lovely chisselled mouth still opened to show teeth like pearls, and the roses and lillies still contended in her cheeks. She was simply dressed; but there was not a curl, however careless it appeared, but fell just where it should, and the large shawl in which she was wrapped, took some new graceful fold each time she moved, and by its brilliant colours gave additional effect to the delicate whiteness of a round arm, covered with bracelets. Her voice, and look, were sweetness itself; but in her eyes, an expression lurked, that recalled to the mind, Walter Scott's "Wiley Dame Heron."

Lost in a trance of most painful feelings, Emmeline sat for some time like a statue, without power to form any resolution, as to whether she would fly or face her enemy. *There* was the being who reigned paramount in her husband's heart! Those were the eyes on which he gazed with fondness! on that hand he had sworn constancy! on those lips he had sealed his vows! the silver tones of that voice thrilled to *his* heart, as his did to hers!

Poor Emmeline gazed on all these charms, till, growing frightened at her own increasing agitation, she hastily got up, and moved towards the door.

"My dear Lady Fitzhenry," exclaimed Lady Mowbray, who unfortunately had observed her intended departure, "I hope you are not already going?"

At that name, the eyes of Lady Florence eagerly followed those of the speaker, and rested on Emmeline. And, for an instant, as if impelled by some power they could not resist, the rivals glanced at each other, and their eyes met. But Emmeline's soon fell beneath the scrutiny, and she turned away her death-like face. The whole expression of Lady Florence's countenance had changed. Emmeline's appearance, every way so different from what she had expected, in an instant roused, within her, feelings she could scarcely command. Her uncontrolled passions were plainly painted in her face; the deep crimson in her cheeks overcame the well applied rouge; her eyes flashed fire; and the lovely smile on her lips was replaced by a fearful expression of "envy, hatred, and malice."

Emmeline, scarcely able to support herself, and endeavouring to utter some excuse, still moved towards the door.

"Well, really you are using me very shabbily," said Lady Mowbray, in reply to her uncertain accents, and following her with most officious civility. "But I know this is the moment when it is impossible to keep any body for half an hour; and quiet, sober people, like myself, have no chance of collecting anything like agreeable society. I suppose you are going to the D————e house, or some such gay thing."

Emmeline stammered out, that she was obliged to go home.

"Home! I fear you are not well," retorted Lady Mowbray, now, for the first time, observing her blanched cheek, and bloodless lips. "Do at least wait till you hear that your carriage is ready:" and, cruelly well bred, she rang the bell, enquiring repeatedly whether Emmeline would not be prevailed upon to take something.

Unable to speak, she shook her head in answer, and the instant the welcome sound of her own name reached her ears,

she darted out of the room, though still followed by the civilities and offers of the lady of the house.

When in her carriage, and when too late, Emmeline remembered Pelham's often repeated advice, to endeavour to control, or, at least conceal, her feelings better. She was aware she had humbled herself before her, who, of all people, she would least wish should read those feelings; and she felt also that she had left herself and her husband subjects for animadversion, certainly not of the most charitable nature. But poor Emmeline, in common with all those who allow their affections to control their judgment, never, till too late, discovered what her conduct should have been—an artlessness of disposition, ill-calculated to contend with a guileful world.

This evening's adventure completely sickened her of the amusements of London; and aware from constant, sad experience, of her inability to perform her hard part properly, she resolved to avoid in future the possibility of any recurrence of such scenes; for though her mind had long been intent on meeting Lady Florence, from a sort of anxious, jealous curiosity, yet now she felt she could not endure the trial again; and that, weakened both in health and spirits, she was no longer equal to the exertions which she knew she should make. She remained, therefore, in spite of Lady Saville's repeated attacks and railleries, for some time entirely at home; and catching gladly at an excuse for avoiding even the opera, she gave away her box the following week, to some Hampshire neighbours, who she heard were in town; and the weather being uncommonly hot, she had, on the Saturday, ordered her carriage, after her solitary dinner, to take a drive out of town, in the hope that a little fresh air might revive and compose her spirits.

But just as she was going, a note arrived from Lady Saville, to say, that she was disappointed of a friend, with whom she was to have gone to the opera, that night, and who, being now unavoidably prevented, had made over the box to her; but her

carriage being broken, and having no one to go with, she would be obliged to give up the plan entirely, unless Emmeline would be compassionate and carry her; and she entreated she would overcome her abominable laziness, and agree to the proposal—adding, it was the new opera, and that it would do her good, for she gave herself the blue devils, by moping so much at home.

Too indifferent to every thing, even to refuse, Emmeline gave up her intended drive, changed her dress, and she and Lady Saville went together to the opera.

About the beginning of the second act, she saw Lady Florence come into a box on the same tier, about ten or twelve off; she was alone—and at that distance, Emmeline thought would probably not recognize her; but, wishing to conceal herself from her view, she made some apology to Lady Saville for being whimsical, and, begging to change places with her, she moved to the opposite seat, drawing the curtain of the box so as entirely to hide herself; although, like the poor bird ensnared by the serpent, she never could withdraw her eyes from her rival.

Before long, a man entered the box where Lady Florence was; he seated himself directly with his back towards Emmeline; but it was impossible for *her* to mistake him;—the oval head, the brown, curly hair, the attitude and air of the arm that leant on the edge of the box, the action of the hand, all told her but too well it could only be Fitzhenry.

Never before had she beheld them together; never before had she, in a manner, witnessed those words, those looks of love, addressed to Lady Florence, which should now have belonged to her. Though but too well aware of the whole truth, she had as yet suffered merely from a vague, unembodied feeling of jealousy. She had been wounded by neglect; by the mortifying conviction that she was not beloved by her husband; but had never yet actually witnessed his demonstrations of love to another.

Lady Florence leant towards Fitzhenry, and seemed to whisper something to him. He shook his head, as if contradicting her; but soon after, Emmeline saw him look round towards the box where she was, with a glass, as if in search of some one. She hastily, although she hardly knew why, shrunk back, hiding herself behind the curtain, which she drew still more forward.

They then appeared to be engaged in most earnest conversation for some time, till at length Fitzhenry, leaning back in his chair, sat with his hand over his face, and there seemed to be a total silence between them. Ere long, a third person came into the box. Fitzhenry then moved from his place, and disappeared.

To those who have known the torments of jealousy, I need not describe Emmeline's feelings; and to those who have not, my expressions would appear exaggerated and unnatural. Like a statue, she sat during the remainder of the opera, not able to attend to any thing around her. Luckily, Lady Saville, who was engaged in a regular flirtation, observed neither her preoccupation, nor additional dejection; and when the curtain fell, Emmeline mechanically followed her companions out of the box. Her complete absence of manner, and Lady Saville's exclusive attention to him, who was whispering soft nothings in her ear, had so effectually driven away all other visitors, that Emmeline had no one to take charge of her; and Lady Saville and her admirer soon parted from her, the former having found a friend to take her to the usual supper party at Lady L——y's after the opera; and the latter being too gallant, and too much *épris* not to accompany her to the carriage, promising, however, to return to Emmeline. At this minute, however, Pelham, luckily observed her, and forcibly making his way up to her, exclaimed,

"What here! and alone! I thought I saw strangers in your box, so never went near it; how comes it I find you in this desolate situation? Do take my arm."

Emmeline made no reply; and, soon perceiving that she was more than usually depressed, Pelham, after one or two ineffectual efforts, forbore even to speak to her. They made their way towards the door at the top of the great stairs; and, leaving her there, Pelham went to look for her carriage.

Emmeline shrunk behind the door, wrapping herself close up in her cloak, and not daring to raise her eyes from the ground for fear of meeting those of her husband, or of Lady Florence. Her own name, however, pronounced close by her, soon roused her, and she saw Mrs. Osterley coming up to speak to her, accompanied by Mr. Moore.

"My dear Lady Fitzhenry," said she, "what an age it is since I have seen you! Where have you been hiding yourself? What can you have been about?"

"I have been out of town," replied Emmeline, in a faint voice.

"Oh, yes! I suppose at Easter, of course; but surely you have been returned some weeks; for I have frequently met Lord Fitzhenry: and, by the bye, now I recollect, I heard of you the other evening, at Lady Mowbray's, where I was so unlucky as just to miss you; and I was sorry to hear you were taken ill there: I hope you are quite recovered."

"Perfectly so," said Emmeline, coldly.

"How did you like our new opera, to-night?" continued Mrs. Osterley. "I thought it inexpressibly dull; yet, in Paris, I had liked it very much; what did you think of it?"

"I?" said Emmeline, absently, "I really don't know."

"Don't know? I suppose you mean you have been so agreeably engaged in conversation, that you did not attend," retorted Mrs. Osterley, laughing. "No one comes to the opera for the music in London."

At that minute, Pelham relieved poor Emmeline by saying, that her carriage was driving up, and that they had better be moving down stairs. She willingly took his proffered arm, bowing to Mrs. Osterley, who, before the door had closed

upon them, and within Emmeline's hearing, exclaimed, (with a loud laugh to Mr. Moore), "Well! that is the best arranged, best understood affair I ever saw. Lord Fitzhenry and his *chère amie* are just gone down one stair, and Lady Fitzhenry and Pelham are making their escape by the other! and then we English boast of our morality."

The door closing, prevented Emmeline from hearing more than the burst of applause which followed this remark. Involuntarily she shrunk from Pelham; but he, not aware of any thing that had passed, intent on getting her to the carriage as soon as possible, only pressed her arm the closer, to steady her steps, and hurried her almost forcibly after him.

When they reached the bottom of the stairs, they found an unusual crowd and bustle among the servants; and, by the noise and lashing of whips in the street, there appeared to be great contention among the coachmen. Pelham, anxious to get Emmeline out of the confusion, still drew her on, persuaded that her carriage must by that time be ready. But when they got outside into the street, he saw that her coachman was engaged in violent contest with another, both endeavouring to drive up at the same moment.

The crowd of footmen who had gathered round the interesting spot, encouraging the merciless combatants, was so great, that to retreat was impossible. Pelham could not, among them, distinguish Emmeline's servants; and, amid the din of voices, whips, trampling of hoofs on the pavement, and shivering of breaking lamps, it was vain to attempt to make them hear him.

Emmeline, nervous and frightened at the uproar around her, forgot for a minute all her former apprehensions, and clung terrified to Pelham; who, to defend her as well as he could, from the unruly mob, put his arm round her. Just then, the horses in her carriage, high-bred, spirited animals, and lately little employed by their mistress, irritated beyond endurance by the lashing of the whip, became ungo-

vernable; they reared up, throwing themselves away from their opponents, and, in the struggle, one of them fell down on the foot-pavement, increasing the confusion.

A loud scream was uttered by a female voice, and, by the rush of link-boys in an instant to the spot, Emmeline beheld Lady Florence Mostyn thrown back on Fitzhenry's breast. The pole of the carriage had touched her, but it was the cry of terror more than of pain.

"Stop! on peril of your life, you rascal!" exclaimed a voice, that shot through Emmeline's very soul.

"Whose carriage is that?" demanded Fitzhenry, in an authoritative tone, while still supporting Lady Florence in his arms. There was a sudden silence; the contending coachmen's whips instantly were both quieted. He again repeated his question more loudly than before.

"My lord!" said one of Emmeline's footmen, going up to Fitzhenry, "it is your lordship's carriage."

"*My* carriage!" he exclaimed angrily. "Who ordered it here?"

"We are here with my lady," replied the terrified footman. "Her ladyship is just getting in—shall I tell her your lordship wishes to be taken home?"

"No, no, you fool!" answered Fitzhenry, in a tone of passion which Emmeline had never before heard from his lips, and which made her shudder; "drive off as fast as you can."

By this time, Pelham had put his charge, more dead than alive, into her carriage, and, not liking to leave her alone in the agitated state she then was, got in after her. Emmeline put out her feeble hand, meaning to prevent him; but, quite overcome, she could not articulate a word; and, no longer able to command herself, she burst into violent hysteric sobs. Totally mistaking her meaning, and interpreting the action into a wish that he should not leave her, Pelham tenderly seized her hand, desiring the servants to go home as fast as

possible. The fallen horse was soon raised. The contending vehicles disengaged, and they drove rapidly off—but followed by cheers and laughter from the more blackguard part of the mob who had witnessed the fray; to which were added personal jokes and remarks, that made Pelham hastily draw up the glasses.

Emmeline still made efforts to speak, but Pelham could not distinguish a single word which she endeavoured to articulate; and, only bidding her compose herself, said every thing most kind and soothing, while he again and again pressed her hand in his. When they arrived in Grosvenor-street, he forcibly drew Emmeline's arm within his, to help her up stairs, and, placing her on a couch, demanded, in a low voice, whether she would take any thing, and whether he should send for her maid.

"Oh no, I shall soon recover—make no fuss, I entreat—it is nothing—I have been very foolish—and frightened—that is all. But," added she, with an imploring look, "leave me—for God's sake leave me."

"Not till I see you better, I really cannot." For her bosom still heaved with convulsive sobs, and her heart seemed bursting.

Uncertain what to do, or say, and surprised at her repulsive manner towards him, Pelham walked, disturbed, up and down the room in silence, thinking it best for a little time to leave her to herself. At length, hastily coming up to her, "My dearest Lady Fitzhenry!" he exclaimed, "allow me to speak to you."

Emmeline started, and looked at him aghast; but without noticing, or even looking at her, Pelham continued in a hurried manner, "I trust you will pardon me for venturing on so sacred a subject,—for touching on sorrows, which you, with such courage, such delicacy, conceal in your own breast—but I know all;—and I know your husband so well, that I am sure I can give you comfort and hope."

Inexpressibly relieved as Emmeline was by these words, which satisfied her that she still had a friend on whom she could rest, yet other feelings for the moment prevailed, and clasping her hands with the vehemence of despair: "Oh, that is impossible! there is no hope, no happiness for me in this world!"

"On my honour," replied Pelham, with earnestness, "you may trust me; I would not deceive you; and, sitting down by her, he took her nervously shaking hand in his. A few minutes before, Emmeline would have shrunk from his touch, but those words had been sufficient to banish entirely all her former miserable apprehensions; soothed by hearing once more the consolatory voice of friendship, for an instant she smiled in gratitude on his kind countenance, and then, quite overcome with the variety of her feelings, tears again burst forth, and her head sank on his shoulder.

At that instant, the door was hastily pushed open, and Fitzhenry appeared! He started on seeing Pelham and Emmeline. As she quickly raised her head at the noise he had made on entering, involuntarily a faint exclamation of dismay escaped her, and even Pelham seemed disconcerted.

"Lady Fitzhenry is not very well;" the latter at length said, after an awkward pause, as if feeling that some explanation of the scene was necessary; "and," added he, addressing himself to Emmeline, "allow me to recommend you to retire to your own room."

Emmeline rose from her seat; every limb shook. Fitzhenry came towards them, fixed his eyes sternly upon her, but said nothing. "I have not been very well lately," she with difficulty stammered out: "the heat in town does not agree with me; and I think, I will go to Charlton to-morrow."

Still Fitzhenry spake not, but Emmeline plainly saw anger and contempt written on his countenance: she faintly wished him and Pelham good night. The words died on her lips; for a sad foreboding told her she was taking a final

leave of her husband, as she was aware that it was impossible they could any longer continue even on the footing they then were. She paused a minute in hopes Fitzhenry would speak. One word would have brought her to his arms, all forgiven, all forgotten. But he seemed resolved on silence, and Emmeline went on into the inner drawing-room that led to her own apartment.

Pelham perplexed, and uncertain how to act, followed her with his eyes without moving from the spot she had quitted, while Fitzhenry, in great apparent perturbation, paced the room. At length, just as Emmeline had reached the door of her own apartment, seeing her trembling hands had some difficulty in opening it, Pelham hurried to her assistance.

"You mean then," said he in a low voice, as he turned the lock, "to go to Charlton to-morrow. You shall hear from me, probably see me, and I will bring you good news, perhaps even Fitzhenry;—cheer up, I entreat you, all will yet be well."

Emmeline forced a faint smile, and held out her hand to him; he seized it with affection. "God of heaven bless and support you," he said, with earnestness, and hastily left her.

When he returned to the outward drawing-room, Fitzhenry was gone; he hurried down stairs in hopes of finding him in his own room, but the servants informed him, he had again left the house.

Emmeline ordered her carriage after church next morning, to take her to Charlton; but how great a change do a few hours often make in our views! She already repented having declared her intention of leaving town. Twice, as the hour named by her drew near, she delayed the carriage, wishing (much as she dreaded the interview) to see Fitzhenry before she went. It was now past three, but still he did not appear, and no message came from him. She rang the bell—"Is Lord Fitzhenry gone out?" she enquired rather fearfully.

"No, my lady," answered the footman; "I believe my lord is not yet up; at least, he has not yet rung his bell; but shall I enquire?"

"Oh! no matter," said Emmeline with a faltering voice, and dismissing the man. Convinced by this, that it was her husband's intention they should not meet, she determined to write to him; for to part thus, in what seemed a decided open rupture without some sort of reconciliation taking place, she now felt to be impossible; she therefore sat down, and took her pen, although not knowing what to say. She once thought she would beg for an interview—demand to be released from her promises of silence, in order to come to some explanation. But yet what had she to say? what had she to learn?

Even if Mrs. Osterley's strange and cruel hints had reached his ears,—if he could so mistake her and his friend as to give any credit to them, could she flatter herself he was enough interested about her to care whom she might prefer? On the other hand, to endeavour to exculpate herself from suspicions which he might never have entertained, seemed ridiculous. Besides, could she now, as a new thing, charge him with coldness, dislike, and infidelity—all which he had openly declared, and for all which he had prepared her months before.

Discouraged by these considerations from adverting to what had passed the night before, she, at length, after various doubts and indecisions, merely wrote these words:—

"A very few days in the country will, I am sure, quite restore me to my usual health. I will return to Grosvenor-Street by the end of the week; but if for any reasons, you should wish me to come home sooner, I trust to your letting me know, and I shall be most willing to obey your summons. You will find me at my father's.

"EMMELINE FITZHENRY."

This she intended should be given to Fitzhenry after her departure, and she sealed and directed it for the purpose.

The carriage drove up to the door—the servants busied themselves in putting on the luggage, and hopeless of an interview with Fitzhenry, Emmeline went slowly, sadly, to her own room, to prepare for her departure.

On opening a drawer she saw the small Geneva watch and chain which Fitzhenry had sent her when a girl. Hardly aware of what she did, she pressed it to her lips—then hung it round her neck. She felt a sad presentiment that she was leaving her husband's roof for ever, and this watch was the only token of kindness she had ever received from him; the only memorial she possessed, except her fatal wedding-ring, placed by him on her hand in reluctance and aversion.

As Emmeline passed back through the drawing-room, she looked mournfully at each object in it, convinced she was beholding them for the last time. She slowly descended the stairs; every limb trembling with nervous apprehension. Again she thought she would endeavour to see her husband; and she paused at the door of his room, to give herself one more chance; for she thought, perhaps, when he heard her, he would come out to meet her; or if she could only once more catch the sound of his voice, in its usual tone of gentleness and kindness, it would give her courage to demand admittance. But all was still. While thus standing debating with herself, her heart beat so violently that she could scarcely breathe, and she was forced to lean against the banister for support.

"The chaise is quite ready, my lady," said a footman, coming up to her; for, seeing her on the stairs, he fancied her impatient to set off—"every thing is put in."

With no possible farther excuse for delay, feeling her fate was fixed, she drew down her veil, to conceal her agitation, hurried through the hall, and without allowing herself more time for reflection, got into the carriage.

"To Charlton," said the butler, who had closed the door

after her, the servants being already placed in the seat behind, and the postilions immediately drove off.

Emmeline looked back once more at the house from which she felt she was, probably, banishing herself for ever; and then sinking back in the carriage, gave way to her feelings. "Farewell, then, Fitzhenry," she exclaimed, "since such is your will; and may heaven bless you, and have pity on me!"

As she drew near Charlton, she endeavoured to compose herself, but in vain: when she looked to the future, all was so dark and hopeless, and she was so strongly impressed with the idea that she should never see Fitzhenry again, that she felt her heart sink within her; and, quite overpowered, and fearful of betraying her secret to her parents, she more than once thought of stopping the carriage. But whither could she go?

Fitzhenry had allowed her to depart. It seemed, indeed, even his wish that she should go; and, unsolicited, she could not return. On they drove. It was a beautiful bright Sunday; every one around her seemed to be enjoying the day in gladness and gratitude. The roads and fields were filled with joyous groups, the air with gay sounds.

"Do I sin in loving him so entirely, so passionately?" thought Emmeline; "that amid so many that rejoice, I alone am doomed to be miserable?"

In uttering these words, perhaps Emmeline *did sin*. But it is the sin into which suffering betrays us all. The wretched are hidden, or hide themselves, from our view; and when, in sorrow, we look around us, we compare our situation with those only who happen, at that moment, to be basking in the transitory sunshine of cheerfulness. How many, as Emmeline's gay equipage drove rapidly by, probably coveted her riches, her luxuries, her youth, and her beauty! while she envied the ragged, laughing beggar-boy, by the road-side, who, as her carriage passed, tossed his naked arms in the air, hallooing, in pure gaiety of heart and enjoyment of existence.

## CHAPTER X.

Has thy heart sickened with deferred hope?
Or felt th' impatient anguish of suspense?
Or hast thou tasted of the bitter cup
Which Disappointment's withered hands dispense?
Thou knowest the poison which o'er flowed from hence
O'er Psyche's tedious, miserable hours.

*Psyche.*

When Emmeline arrived at her father's, the servant informed her, that both Mr. and Mrs. Benson were out in the carriage, but were expected home before dinner. At that moment, she felt their absence was a relief, and hastily getting out of the carriage, she desired the coachman, on his return to town, immediately to ask whether Lord Fitzhenry had any orders for him—for she still fondly hoped, that on reading her note, he might follow her, and might himself wish for some explanation of what had passed the preceding evening.

During the hour that elapsed before her father and mother returned, Emmeline endeavoured to compose her spirits. She bathed her red and swollen eyes, walked in the fresh air, and, hearing their carriage drive up to the door, resolved to command herself, and went to meet them with a cheerful countenance. But when the spirits are weak, there is nothing so difficult to bear as tenderness. Her father's fond benediction, the smile of delight that beamed in her mother's face, on unexpectedly beholding her, were too much for poor Emmeline, unused as she was to demonstrations of affection; and falling into her mother's arms, in spite of her resolutions and endeavours, she again burst into tears.

"My dear love! my child!" both exclaimed, "what can be the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing," said Emmeline; "I have not been quite well lately, and my spirits are in consequence weakened; and I was too happy to see you—that is all."

Mrs. Benson shook her head, and looked at her incredulously. Her father, fixing his eyes stedfastly on her face, took her hand.

"Speak to me, my girl," said he. "What is it that so distresses you?"

"Nothing!" again repeated Emmeline in a fainter voice; "I shall soon be quite well."

"Emmy! Emmy!" rejoined her father, "for once I don't believe you; it is too long since you have not been *well*, as you call it; and there is *a* something the matter that I must and will know."

Emmeline averted her head, and did not answer.

"You need not attempt to deceive me any longer, girl," said Mr. Benson, sternly; "I have long suspected that all was not right between you and your husband. I will now know the truth, and I have a right to demand it of you."

Still she was silent.

"What! you will not speak! you will not confide in me!" he continued, his temper rising; "then I must seek for information elsewhere:" and he moved towards the door of the room.

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed Emmeline, terrified—"What would you do?"

"Do? why I shall go to town directly. I shall see Lord Fitzhenry," said Mr. Benson, in a calmer, but decided tone; "and from him I must learn what has passed between you, since you, my own child, will not trust me."

"Oh! speak not so to me, dear father! indeed I have full confidence in your kindness—in your indulgence; but really, I have nothing to tell which you do not know already—I have been to blame, perhaps—I mean I was not aware—I was deceived,—even you, dear father"—

"Deceived?" repeated Mr. Benson quickly—catching at the word: "deceived by me? what do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing," said Emmeline, alarmed at her father's unusual look of anger: "we were all to blame, but—but—perhaps it would have been better if—"

Poor Mr. Benson, like many both of his superiors and inferiors, could not bear to be supposed to have erred, or even to have been mistaken, and all the less when conscious the imputation was true; in a tone of violence, therefore, which Emmeline had never heard addressed to her, and suddenly letting go her hand, which he had been holding in both of his: "What, Emmeline," said he, "are you so unjust, so ungrateful, as to accuse me as the cause of your misfortunes? blame your poor, doating, old father for having given up his all to secure your happiness? For shame, for shame, Emmy, I never expected that from you."

"Oh hear me, hear me patiently!" she exclaimed, seizing on his arm.

"No, Emmeline, I can hear no more, bear no more, I have long guessed how matters were between you and Lord Fitzhenry, and still I have forborne. I held my peace as long as I could; but my pride will not allow me to be any longer silent. I will not be trampled upon; I cannot endure to see the delight of my old age, my only child, destroyed by neglect and unkindness. Lord Fitzhenry presumes upon his superior rank. He thinks he may with impunity insult and break the heart of the humble banker's daughter. But his lordship is mistaken; I too have pride as well as he. Curse on *his* rank, curse on *your* money; they have been the cause of all this; but I will have redress."

"Redress! Good God, what do you mean?" enquired Emmeline, terrified at his words and manner.

"I will insist on an immediate separation; on a divorce, in short, for the law will give it me."

A scream of horror escaped from Emmeline's heart at these

words. "No power on earth shall ever separate me from him," she exclaimed, with the wild energy of passion. "Oh! my dear father, be appeased; have patience and all will be well."

She had sunk on her knees, and, overcome with the variety of her painfully contending feelings, her head grew giddy, her sobs choked her, and she fell nearly senseless at Mr. Benson's feet. Every attention of doating fondness was lavished upon her. Before long, she became more composed, and her parents, whose every feeling was centered in her, seeing how weak she was, both in body and spirits, said no more, but turned their whole endeavours towards cheering and restoring her; avoiding, for the moment, every thing that could renew her sorrows.

After some little time had elapsed, as if by common consent, they all forced themselves to talk on indifferent subjects, but, in the effort, poor Emmeline's lip often quivered. At dinner, she turned away her heavy, sickened eye from the food before her; and when her father filled her glass with wine, bidding her drink it, for that it would do her good, and, assuming a gay manner, pledged her and drank to her health, tears again rushed into her eyes, as she recollected the pride with which he was always wont on such occasions to unite her husband's name with hers.

The next morning, resolving if possible still to deceive her parents, and by assumed cheerfulness to do away the impression made upon their minds the preceding evening, poor Emmeline entered the breakfast-room with as composed a countenance as she could command, and even forced a smile, when, as in former days, she went up to her father to claim his parental kiss. Mr. Benson, however, did not raise his eyes towards her, or even return the pressure of her hand, but in silence pointed to the seat prepared for her. She looked at her mother, whose eyes were fixed on the table before her, and she saw that they were red with crying. Twice Emme-

line endeavoured at conversation by making some remark on the weather, but no answer was given to her. Mr. Benson's attention seemed entirely engrossed by the newspaper that lay beside him, his breakfast remaining untouched.

Aware that something disagreeable must have happened, from the disturbed appearance of her father and mother, a thousand vague but dreadful apprehensions soon took possession of Emmeline's mind, and at last, unable any longer to endure the state of alarm and suspense into which her fears had thrown her, she suddenly seized her father's arm, entreating him for pity's sake to tell her what had so discomposed him, what had happened.

"You, Lady Fitzhenry, can better inform *us* of that," he coldly said, as he put the paper into her hand, and pointed to the following paragraph:

"A singular fracas took place at the Opera on Saturday night; not being yet informed of the particulars, we forbear making any reflections. As it is a double intrigue, and therefore neither party can complain, it is impossible to say how the affair may end. The *chère amie* of the noble lord is well known in the fashionable world both *abroad* and at *home*; and it is not perhaps surprising that the neglected wife should have *pris son parti*, and found a champion to espouse her cause. He is said to be in the *diplomatic* line, and *of course* a particular friend of the husband. One rumour states the injured wife to have eloped—another that a duel has taken place. Certain it is that two carriages with the F—z—y arms were seen to drive furiously out of Grosvenor-street at different hours and in different directions on Sunday afternoon."

Emmeline turned deadly pale as she read this cruel paragraph; but a still more ghastly hue spread itself over her mother's face as she anxiously watched her daughter's coun-

tenance, and fancied that in her emotion she read confession of guilt.

There was a dead silence. Emmeline, entirely satisfied as to her own perfect innocence, and horror-stricken by the latter part of the paragraph relating to the duel, was occupied in dwelling on the possibility of there being any foundation for the rumour; and her whole mind was so engrossed by that one thought, the safety of Fitzhenry, that she did not even think of exculpating herself from the charge. Indeed, she had totally forgotten the presence even of her parents, when Mr. Benson, striking his hand with violence on the table, in a voice of agony exclaimed—

"Speak Emmeline, are you innocent? or am I for ever disgraced?"

Emmeline startled by her father's vehemence, looked wildly at him for an instant, as if not understanding his words.

"I see, but too plainly, how it is. Don't speak," he continued quickly; and, covering his face with both his hands, he gave way to the violence of his feelings.

Completely roused by the burst of passion in one so seldom moved to tears, Emmeline threw herself on her knees beside him, and, endeavouring to take hold of his hand, exclaimed,

"Oh, my father, what can all this mean? is it possible you can suspect?—God knows how innocent I am."

Mr. Benson, wiping away his tears, looked at her for an instant in silence. "Repeat those blessed words again, child, for I must believe you."

"By the God of truth!" exclaimed Emmeline, as she clasped her hands with fervency and fixed her eyes steadfastly on Mr. Benson, "I am innocent of having in thought, word, or deed, departed from the love and duty I swore to my husband at the altar. Alas!" added she, as she hid her face in her father's bosom, "I only love him too well, too entirely for my happiness." These last words became indistinct, and choked by her tears.

"Thank God, thank God!" repeated Mr. Benson, with a sort of hurried nervousness of manner, as he kissed his daughter's forehead: "I could not have borne that; your dishonour I could not have borne, Emmy, it would soon have brought me to my grave. I believe you, Emmeline, on my honour I do; you never in your life deceived me; but what does that cursed story mean?" pointing to the paragraph to which his mind seemed again to have returned with doubt and anxiety.

"I will tell you all, as far as——" and Emmeline stopped short, for how could she explain what had passed, without drawing on a necessary confession of her whole sad story.

"No more concealments, Emmy, I will and must know all," said Mr. Benson sternly.

Emmeline looked at her father as if supplicating for pity.

"Spare her now, Mr. Benson," said her mother as she folded her in her arms: "we have it from her own true lips, that she is blameless, and let what will have happened, we can bear any thing now."

"Bless you, bless you for believing me," said Emmeline, as she threw her arms round her mother's neck in gratitude: "but," added she, with a melancholy and reproachful look, "my father does not, he still doubts me."

"No, my girl, indeed I don't," cried Mr. Benson: "do you think I would call you my Emmy, and let you remain one instant under my roof if I thought you were disgraced. On my honour, I believe you, but I am fretted and unhappy. I have toiled for your happiness, and it has ended in nothing but mortification; for I see my darling is not happy, which is more than I can bear:" and tears once more rushed into his eyes. "And who the deuce do they mean by their 'diplomatic champion?'" added he, again casting his eyes on the paragraph.

"The whole is an abominable falsehood," said Emmeline, in a hurried manner. "They mean Mr. Pelham, I suppose.

for he was with me;" and she reddened as she spoke, at the bare possibility of such an insinuation. "Coming out of the opĕra-house last night, there was a battle between the coachmen—and it seemed as if something disagreeable had passed between Lord Fitzhenry and Mr. Pelham—but it must have been only a misunderstanding—no one was to blame—only when I parted from them last night, they certainly seemed much irritated against each other."

"And have you not seen your husband since?" eagerly enquired Mrs. Benson.

"No," said Emmeline, in a low tone, and averting her head. Mr. Benson gave a significant shrug of his shoulders.

"And pray what had you, and Mr. Pelham, and Lord Fitzhenry to do with the fighting of the coachmen; and, above all, what in the name of wonder, had his *chère amie*, as the idiots call her, to do with it at all? whose carriage fought with yours? for I presume, you and your husband were together; surely you can sit in the same coach, though you can't sleep in the same room?"

"I really can't tell—it was all such a confusion," replied Emmeline, colouring deeply. "But, dear father, don't waste time, but, for pity's sake, send some one to Grosvenor-Street, and ask if all is well—and yet, perhaps," added she, the next minute, alarmed at the possible consequences of her own suggestion, "perhaps it will be better not—it must be all a foolish story."

"I shall go myself to Lord Fitzhenry's," said Mr. Benson, after a moment's reflection.

"*You* go?" exclaimed Emmeline, terrified—"indeed there is no necessity—it is only a trifle—in fact nothing has occurred, only the carriage——I assure you, Lord Fitzhenry will be quite surprised to see you—perhaps displeased—indeed you had better not go."

"I shall judge for myself," said Mr. Benson, coldly. "I don't believe one word about the carriage story; your hus-

band would not be such a fool as to fight about a scratched pannel; and as for his displeasure, I shall care little for that, for he seems very little to care for mine."

This intention of her father's seriously alarmed Emmeline; for, in the state of irritation in which both he and Lord Fitzhenry then were, she dreaded the result of their meeting; and, clinging to Mr. Benson, she ejaculated—" Oh, then pray let me go with you!"

Brought up in the good old fashioned system of filial obedience and dependence, Emmeline, although the object of the tenderest affection, had no idea even now that she was a wife, of putting her will in opposition to that of her parents, or of boldly declaring any determination of her own. She could only entreat, and *that* her countenance did most eloquently, during the moment or two that now passed before Mr. Benson answered her. At length, he consented, saying—" Yes; I believe that will be best, for I shall by that means hear both sides."

These words raised fresh apprehensions in Emmeline's mind, for she saw that her father's intention was to come to some explanation with her husband; and good, even kind as she knew those intentions were, yet she felt, that any interference on his part, particularly at that moment, would only widen the breach between them, and make her situation worse, by bringing matters to that crisis from which she shrank with dismay. She, therefore, said every thing she could venture upon, to induce him to desist; but her words seemed only to irritate him still more against Lord Fitzhenry, and to make him the more resolved on seeking an interview with him; so at last, finding how vain were all her arguments, and that having settled the matter in his own mind, Mr. Benson would listen to no excuse, no reason, that she could give for changing her opinion so quickly, Emmeline gave up the point in despair, and, in a short time, she and her father were on the road to town.

At first the miles appeared to her to be endless, but as they

drew near town, dreading the possible result of their visit to Grosvenor-Street, poor Emmeline was several times tempted to beg the driver might slacken his pace, but she controlled her nervous agitation as well as she could, and they drove on in silence, till they entered London; when she suddenly seized Mr. Benson's hand, saying, with a look of entreaty—"If we see him, you will leave all to me,—indeed, he is no way to blame, only a misunderstanding, which I shall soon be able to clear up."

"Ay, and it *shall* be cleared up," replied Mr. Benson. "If you, Lady Fitzhenry, are content to let this vile slur remain on your reputation, I am not, and I shall oblige those who can refute it, to do so. I shall most certainly see Lord Fitzhenry, and I must from him get a better explanation of all this strange business, than I can from you. My God!" added he, after a moment's pause, as if speaking to himself—"to think that my daughter's name should appear in a public paper, with such an imputation attached to it! to think, that after all my labours, it should have come to this!" And, after striking his cane several times with impatience on the bottom of the carriage, he suddenly, as if he thought greater speed would relieve his feelings, bade the coachman drive faster.

This injunction was the means of soon bringing them into Grosvenor-Square; and poor Emmeline's agitation became almost unbearable. What was she going to learn? what was going to be her fate? for on the next hour she felt that it depended. They drove up to the door of her husband's house —of her own home—and yet she shrunk back, in dread and dismay. A hasty glance showed her, that all the shutters were closed—and a cold, deadly sickness came over her. The servant knocked—but no one answered—he knocked again, and rung; and at length the porter appeared, and a parley ensued between him and Mr. Benson's servant.

Emmeline could endure the suspense no longer; and, with the paleness of death on her face, grasping her father's arm

—"In pity!" she cried, "speak to the man yourself." Mr. Benson beckoned him to the carriage window.

"I want to see Lord Fitzhenry," said he. "Is he at home?"

"No, sir; neither my lord nor my lady are at home"—for Emmeline had so shrunk to the back of the carriage, that the man did not see her.

"Is Lord Fitzhenry quite well?" rejoined Mr. Benson, not knowing very well how to get at the information he wanted.

"Yes, sir! I believe so," said the porter, apparently surprised at the question. "His lordship went away yesterday afternoon; he did not leave his room till late, but I did not hear that he was any ways ill; I thought my lady had gone to Charlton."

"Do you know where he is gone to?" continued Mr. Benson.

"No, I really can't say; his lordship ordered post horses in a great hurry, and the carriage was to take him up at some place in town, but I really can't tell where; but I will enquire in the house if any one knows."

"Did he leave word when he was to return?"

"No, my lord said nothing, and we do not expect him back for some days, as he gave no orders."

A new and appalling idea now flashed across Emmeline's mind—could Fitzhenry and Lady Florence have fled together! and, not content with the entire possession of each other's affections, could they have determined, by that open act, at once to rid themselves of the thraldom of their respective marriages! There was nothing of which she could not suspect Lady Florence; but her heart smote her for thus, even for an instant, accusing Fitzhenry; and, shocked at her own surmises, she hastily enquired whether Lord Fitzhenry had left no letter, no message for her.

"Not that I knows of, my lady," said the porter, bowing to Emmeline, and evidently astonished at her question, as well

as at her appearance, as she had hitherto remained concealed behind Mr. Benson; "but I will go and enquire."

"This is all very strange," muttered Mr. Benson to himself, while he was gone; "I can't make it out for the life of me."

As for poor Emmeline, she was totally unable to express, or even to form an opinion; so many fearful apprehensions succeeded each other in her mind. After an interval of time, which appeared to her endless, the man returned with a note in his hand.

"I can hear of no letter, my lady; but this note the housekeeper found in your ladyship's room; perhaps it is what you mean."

Emmeline eagerly seized it; but what was her mortification on finding it was her own note to Fitzhenry, with the seal still unbroken. In the confusion of her mind, she could not recollect whether, on leaving home the preceding day, she had given any orders about it: if she had, she must conclude, that Fitzhenry, occupied by other objects, had neglected, perhaps scorned, to read it. But at all events, as that note was unread, he must have gone from home in the full conviction that she, on her part, had left it in open, declared war.

Quite overcome by the combination of distressing circumstances in which she was placed, after tearing her ill-fated note in a thousand pieces, with a vehemence of impatience very foreign to her nature, Emmeline again sunk back in the carriage, to conceal her disordered state from the servants. There was a moment's pause. At length Mr. Benson enquiring where Mr. Pelham lived, desired the coachman to drive to his house. Emmeline drew down the blind, spoke not a word, but seemed to give herself up to her fate in despair.

When they reached the end of the street to which they had been directed, Mr. Benson stopped the carriage, and saying he would return to her directly, got out. He was some time absent: when he returned, he evidently was endeavouring to maintain a composure which he did not feel.

"Mr. Pelham has likewise left London," said he. "He too went away yesterday evening with post horses—very strange; but, I suppose, some junket out of town," added he, making an awkward attempt at cheerfulness. The step of the carriage was let down for him. "Hang me!" continued Mr. Benson, "if I know what to do next, or where to go to. To drive after them would really be a wild-goose chase; for the chances are a hundred to one against our taking the same road; for the plague is, that one don't know at all where they are gone to. Mr. Pelham's servants, too, can't tell where their master went—a parcel of stupid, outlandish boobies, that can't speak Christian-like language."

And, apparently much distressed and perplexed, Mr. Benson, with one foot on the step of the carriage, looked anxiously up and down the street, as if in the hope of seeing some one, or something, that could suggest an idea to him.

"Let us return to Charlton, directly," said Emmeline, in a low, broken voice; for a new apprehension had entered her mind. When she reflected on the gentle nature of Pelham's temper, on his devoted affection for Fitzhenry, and adverted to the falsehood of the newspaper story in the part relating to herself, her mind began to be much easier with regard to the report of the duel. As to Fitzhenry's sudden departure from town, it was certainly strange; and in spite of her endeavours to combat the idea, she could not help interpreting it in a way the most agonizing to her feelings: but still it was just possible that even there she might be mistaken; and if so, nothing would be more likely to incense Fitzhenry against her, or to widen the breach between them, than finding she was following his steps like a spy; and that even Mr. Benson took upon himself to enquire into his actions. The instant this idea entered her mind, her whole anxiety was to return to Charlton, and there wait patiently till time explained this alarming business; and a very few hours

must, she thought, relieve her at least from suspense; she therefore again intreated that they might go back to Charlton immediately.

Mr. Benson paused for a minute or two, as if ruminating in his own mind on some method of obtaining information; but none occurring, he, in a dejected tone, bade the servants return home. The coachman turned his horses' heads, and the father and daughter travelled the nine weary miles back to Charlton in total silence.

Mrs. Benson, who had been anxiously awaiting their return, soon saw she had little good to learn; and forebore to question Emmeline; but, after putting into her hand a letter that had come for her during her absence, went to learn what had passed from Mr. Benson.

The letter was from Mr. Pelham: it contained these words, and was dated Sunday evening.

"I cannot, as I had hoped and intended, see you to-day, nor indeed to-morrow. I find Fitzhenry has left town, and I am about to follow him. Depend on me for doing all that friendship can do, to restore him to you. So I still say, 'be of good cheer.' As soon as Fitzhenry and I have met, I am sure I shall be able to bring you good news. By Wednesday, I think, you may depend on seeing me; or, at all events, on hearing from me; and I don't despair of even bringing Fitzhenry with me."

This letter, meant to express comfort and hope, conveyed the very reverse to Emmeline's sick mind; she had now no doubt but that Fitzhenry and Lady Florence had left town together, and that if Pelham attempted at any remonstrance or interference, however mild and sensible, still every thing was to be feared from his meeting with her husband under such circumstances. That she had parted with Fitzhenry for ever, seemed now but too certain. There was a mystery in

Pelham's letter that evidently showed he had something to conceal, and that could only be the most dreadful of all intelligence to her. Poor Emmeline raised her streaming eyes to heaven, whileshe clasped her hands in the energy of suffering, but not one prayer could she utter. Alas! what had she to ask? Could she wish again to behold him who scorned, who loathed, who had, in short, fled from her? And could she wish to cease to love him? What affectionate mind but recoils with horror from the dreary thought? She might, indeed, pray for release from an existence which was become insupportable to her! And, perhaps, in the rebellion of a young and suffering heart, she did give utterance to the impatient wish. But let mortals adore the Merciful Power, who, pitying the weakness of short-sighted humanity, marks not down those prayers. It is the first pang of severe suffering that wrings them from us; in time, we learn to endure; and, in the evening of a chequered life we look back, perhaps, on those very moments of sorrow with the greatest gratitude, and say with the poet—

> " Amid my list of blessings infinite,
> Stands this the foremost—that my heart has bled."

The next morning the following paragraph, which appeared in the newspaper, seemed very much to relieve Mr. Benson; but, if possible, it only increased Emmeline's apprehensions.

" It is with sincere pleasure that we can confidently contradict a report in our last, respecting a certain noble pair in Grosvenor-Street, in so far at least as the fair fame of *one* of the ladies is concerned. Lady F——y, we understand, merely left town in order to pay a visit to her father at Ch—l—n, where she now is. A legal separation between the parties may however be anticipated, as it is certain that the noble Lord has also most abruptly left home, and, it is whispered,

not *alone*. Rumour also states that the diplomatic friend has followed the fugitives, in order, if possible, to prevent the scandal of a public eclat."

Mr. Benson's feelings had been so entirely engrossed by that part of the first newspaper story, alluding to his daughter's supposed levity of conduct, and his mind was so relieved by this public and honourable acquittal, that he might have overlooked the rest of the paragraph just mentioned, had not Emmeline's look of misery reminded him, that though that unfounded subject for distress was removed, all her but too real causes for anxiety remained.

Tuesday passed without any intelligence of any kind reaching them. Wednesday at length arrived, and during its heavy hours, the perturbation of Emmeline's agitated mind was painful to witness. For on what Pelham was that day to impart, she felt her future fate in life depended.

With one so young, and unused to sorrow, hope still will linger, and even though against her reason and her conviction, the concluding words in Pelham's letter sometimes for an instant caused a thrill of pleasure to her heart, and she gave way to delightful anticipations. Fitzhenry might have mistaken *her* feelings towards him : she was aware that latterly she had given way to irritation in her manner. Pelham might let him into the real state of her affections, for she well knew that that friend had read her heart right, and, perhaps, when her husband knew all, his better feelings would prevail, and would restore him to her.

But when Emmeline's imagination had carried her thus far, the chilling conviction of the truth came at once to destroy these dreams of happiness, and make place for despair. Thus, in all the miserable agitation of doubt and anxiety, she passed the day listening to every sound, starting at the noise of every bell, and the opening of every door; and so wild were sometimes her fantasies, that she more than once thought she heard

her husband's step on the stairs, and his voice in the passage that led to her room. But the day passed, and no one came.

Late in the evening, when she had nearly given up all hope, she heard the door bell ring. She started up—every pulse throbbed—unable to move from her place, she remained breathless, watching the door: it opened, but no Fitzhenry appeared; and the servant entering, brought her a letter. It was not Fitzhenry's hand-writing. A cold tremor crept over her; the room swam round her, and the letter fell from her hands. Her mother caught it up, and seeing how unable her daughter was herself to read it, and dreading the effects of such violent agitation on her already weakened frame, she ventured to break the seal, and hastily glancing her eyes over its contents, "My child," said she, taking Emmeline's icy hand, "it is from your friend Mr. Pelham. He says, he could not, as he meant, come to you; that pressing public affairs oblige him to return immediately to Vienna. He is already on his way to Dover. Your husband is quite well—but——"

"But what?" exclaimed Emmeline, with a look of horror.

"He too is gone abroad."

"Gone!" repeated Emmeline wildly; "then it is all over:" and she was carried senseless to her bed.

Her wretched parents wept and prayed by her; for hers was a sorrow to which no earthly comfort could be given. In a few hours, however, composure—that dreadful composure of exhausted nature—returned, and the first minute she could read, she asked for Mr. Pelham's letter. It contained these words:

"You will be surprised, and I fear painfully so, when you hear we are leaving England. Some unforeseen public affairs oblige me instantly to return to the Continent; and I am going to take Fitzhenry with me: but, for God's sake, keep up your spirits; he is well, and we have had a great deal of conversation. In time, you shall know all; and very soon, I

am sure, he will be restored to you; but my poor friend's mind is at present in a state approaching to delirium; and we must be patient with him.

"Dearest Lady Fitzhenry, I would not for the world give you false hopes; but, I still repeat, that all will be well; you deserve to be happy, and heaven will take care that you shall be so. Fitzhenry has been infatuated, blinded, deceived, every way. But his eyes are now opened, and (not for the world would I deceive you, even to give you one moment of false happiness), trust me, he admires and loves you; I was certain such excellence could not long be thrown away upon one so fitted to appreciate it. The fatal madness which has hitherto rendered him insensible to his real happiness, is now at an end—on my honour it is.

"I have time for no more; the carriage is at the door; I am only waiting for Fitzhenry; he knows I am writing to you; you shall ere long hear from me again."

Emmeline hardly knew what to conclude from this letter; she read it over and over. Sometimes she interpreted its contents favourably to her feelings; but, in general, the impression it left was not that of hope. She believed Pelham, when he told her that Fitzhenry's connexion with Lady Florence was at an end; she must believe such solemn assurances; but what had she gained? Her rival, no longer the cause, still her husband fled from her. What could that mean, but that still she had to encounter settled, determined aversion? for he was leaving England without one word, one attempt at reconciliation—and with no time even named for his return. In short, in spite of Pelham's encouragement, she felt but too well convinced their separation was for ever.

Sorrow sunk deeply into Emmeline's heart; but, for her parent's sake, she resolved to exert herself. She left her room, agreed to go out into the fresh air; acquiesced in whatever was proposed to her; forced herself to converse on indifferent

subjects; and even sometimes endeavoured at cheerfulness. But such exertions could not deceive. The "sickness of hope deferred," preyed on her health; she grew daily thinner; and her cheeks were either deadly pale, or flushed with the deepest feverish crimson.

Poor Mrs. Benson gazed at her in silent anxiety. There was their Emmeline again returned to them, to the same place, the same quiet home, avocations and duties she used to perform; but, how changed! Formerly, she was their joy, their pride: to look on her laughing eyes, and on her fresh smooth cheek, had been enough to make them happy; but now the sight was misery. Mr. Benson also was changed. Though sometimes, in the kind endeavour to cheer his melancholy companions, he attempted to resume his usual loquacity, and even tried his bad jokes; yet, as they no longer proceeded from an exuberantly happy heart, they had lost their only merit; and, seeing how ill they in general succeeded, and that his intended wit and mirth oftener forced tears than smiles from his suffering daughter, he at last gave up the attempt entirely, and seemed to resign himself to the sadness which oppressed him. He appeared also to have entirely lost his usual bustling activity. He often stood for hours at the window, with his hand in his pockets, staring at the blue sky and green grass, objects which he had never been seen to gaze at before; or, sitting with the newspaper in his hand, reading over and over the same page, almost unconscious of the words before him; for now, neither public news, nor even the price of stocks, seemed to have power to arrest his attention.

Fitzhenry was never named among them, nor that painful subject any way alluded to.

One day, however, that Mr. Benson and Emmeline were alone together, after the former had, as was now usual to him, sat a long time silent, he suddenly looked up, and, addressing her in the decided tone of one who has well considered the matter of which he is about to treat—

"Emmy!" said he—for he had now quite left off calling her Lady Fitzhenry, which he had, with apparently proud satisfaction after her marriage, always done—"Emmy, I have indulged your fancies all this time—I have complied with your request—I have said nothing—done nothing. In short, to please you, I have, in truth, made but a silly figure; but this cannot go on—it is impossible—yon cannot yourself wish it. Something decided must be settled between you and your husband."

Emmeline's pale cheek grew still paler, and, in answer, she put into her father's hand Mr. Pelham's last letter. He read it over and over and over several times, looked at the date, the signature, the direction, even with the precaution and accuracy of business, and then returning it—

"I can't make head or tail of it. Lord Fitzhenry and you, Emmy, and your diplomatic champion, are all beyond my comprehension. I declare I don't know what any of you would be at. If your husband has turned off his kept mistress, as I suppose he has by this (shame on him ever to have had one—and another man's wife, too, into the bargain), why, now the coast is clear, why can't he come and fetch you, his lawful wife, home, and live respectably, and be at least decently civil to you. What the deuce is he gone abroad for? unless indeed it is to look out for some new lady, being, I suppose tired of the old one—for such madams, I believe, abound at Paris. In short, Emmy, I will not let this sort of thing go on any longer. I will give you one month; and if during that time, your husband makes no advances towards a reconciliation, I will then come forward. Surely, Emmeline, your own pride must make you wish that I should."

"Pride!" repeated Emmeline, mournfully. "Oh! my father, what has pride to do with affection?"

"What!" rejoined her father, warmly, "can you tamely submit to be insulted and neglected as you are? And pray what has affection to do with the business? when this man

don't seem to care one farthing for you; and, now indeed that the truth comes out, it seems he never did. A pretty object for affection truly. I thought you had better feelings. Fool! idiot! that I was," continued he, striking his forehead, "to be so proud of this marriage. Could I have guessed how matters would have turned out, I had rather have seen you the wife of the lowest clerk in my banking-house, than that of this Lord Fitzhenry, or any other Lord in Christendom with his vile paramour. But who would have thought it of him? such a fine young man as he was. I always liked the lad; there was something so frank and manly about him. Do you remember those balls we used to give on your birth-day, Emmy, when he always danced with you, as a thing of course? How you used to tear about the room together like a couple of madcaps, looking so happy! Then, when he took leave of you going abroad—Lord, I remember it as if it was but yesterday —he kissed you and called you his little wife. My silly heart jumped with joy at those words. And then he sent you that watch which I see still hanging round your neck. I thought all that promised so well. Who could have dreamt of his turning out as he has done? And even since your marriage at Arlingford, how civil and pleasant he was to me, and to you even seemingly. I really can hardly now bring myself to believe any one so young can be so deceitful and hardened!"

How long Mr. Benson might have gone on thus giving vent to the thoughts which apparently now constantly engrossed his mind, it is impossible to say; for, kind hearted and affectionate as he was, he had so little notion of the nature of love, of the refinement of poor Emmeline's passion, and of the feelings of a lacerated heart that recoils from every touch, that he had no idea he was running daggers into hers; till, no longer able to endure the torture of his words, and grasping his arm in agony, "Oh, my father!" she exclaimed, "do not talk of him."

"Well, well," said he, patting her hand as he looked with concern on her suffering countenance, "if it displeases you,

we need not talk of the matter just now; but remember, Emmy, one month more, and I *will* have my own way in this business."

## CHAPTER XI.

"Un siècle d'attente—un jour de bonheur."

Ten days of the month passed, and still no intelligence of any sort about Lord Fitzhenry reached Charlton.

Emmeline saw his and Pelham's name in the papers among those who had crossed the water to Calais; but she heard no more. This strange silence seemed to confirm her husband's hostile determination with regard to her, and to fix her future fate. She uttered no complaint, shed no tears, was silent, and resigned, and appeared to be some figure wound up to perform the ordinary actions of life without taking any part in them, so still was her composure. But sometimes, when her mother looked at her, pressed her hand, or kissed her pale cheek, then, a momentary convulsive sob would escape from her oppressed bosom, and a solitary burning tear would steal down her face.

There is a dead pause in affliction which is dreadful. As long as we have to act, to exert ourselves, even though those exertions may be painful, still they are more bearable than sitting down quietly with grief, without any thing to look to. When day after day passes the same, and when at last, from the sameness of our thoughts and feelings, even suffering has no longer power to affect us, our tears cease to flow, though the heart within is breaking.

The dreary desolation of her future existence, from which,

appalled at the prospect, she at first shrunk with horror, now constantly occupied her, to the exclusion of every other thought, and of every ray of hope. A short twelvemonth back, knowing no felicity beyond loving, and being beloved by her fond parents, she was at peace, and happy—now, new feelings, new powers of heart, unknown to herself before, had been awakened in her, and she hated herself when she felt—(and she could not help feeling it) that not all their kindness, all their partial affection, could soothe and occupy a heart which *love*, love for Fitzhenry, had now so entirely engrossed. Love is a draught of so inebriating a quality, that it is long before one who has known its delirious power can (even when that delirium ceases) return satisfied to the sober feelings of friendship. The sun which had warmed and illumined life is set; and all other near and dear affections are as the quiet cold rays of moonlight to the bereaved soul which shivers beneath their chilling influence.

How often, when endeavouring to soothe those who are writhing under such sorrows, are the affections of parent and kindred offered as compensations. But such comfort, sickening the heart at its own ingratitude, only adds to its misery. Time alone, the sobering influence of years, can heal such wounds, or rather skin them over, for the scar remains, till at last it thickens and hardens, rendering it insensible to every impression; but is that happiness? When a sacred voice announced, that "a man shall leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife"—it plainly told how overwhelming such feelings were intended to be; and if allowed, nay, commanded in man, how much more in woman, whose existence is made up of the affections of the heart!

Poor Emmeline endeavoured to resume her usual occupations, but in vain. She tried to read—it was impossible; once or twice, in the wish to pass the heavy hours, she proposed reading aloud to her mother, as she had formerly done. Her lips mechanically uttered the words; but, at a pause,

Mrs. Benson making some remark on the book, Emmeline startled at the sound of her voice—looked vacantly at her, apparently unconscious of what she alluded to. The mother, suppressing a sigh, endeavoured at some explanation, but seeing how hopeless was the attempt to fix her daughter's mind on any subject, she quietly closed the book, saying, "Emmy, my love, we will continue that some other time, for I think reading hurts your eyes."

Emmeline gave her a meanless, melancholy smile in answer, and sat in silence; her eyes fixed on the volume, as if even unconscious that their lecture was over. Lost as she was in thought, it would perhaps have been difficult for her to have told what those thoughts were, all was so vague; and on no one circumstance in her situation, could she rest her mind with expectation of any sort. Even religion could bring her little comfort. Had Fitzhenry, penitent towards heaven and herself, been taken from her by death, she would have found peace for her thoughts in piety. She could have said to her widowed heart—we shall meet again. But that way, Emmeline, shuddering, dared not look. Often too, she aggravated her distress by reproaching herself for having brought sorrow and melancholy to that home, which had been always hitherto one of content and cheerfulness; and she sometimes thought it was her duty to leave it, and relieve her parents of her painful presence—but whither could she go? was Arlingford still her home? could she venture to return there?

Thus, day after day sadly passed without her being able to form any plan for herself or the future, till she was one morning roused from the state of stupor into which she had sunk, by Lord Arlingford being suddenly announced.

Since the marriage, for which both he and Mr. Benson had been so equally anxious, there had been little intercourse between them. Lord Arlingford having obtained his object, and secured Emmeline's fortune, he was not particularly anxious to keep up any thing like intimacy with Mr. Benso n

whose honest, blunt vulgarity did not at all suit the refined elegance of his own manners and habits.

Emmeline was with her mother alone when Lord Arlingford entered. She turned deadly pale; for, in a minute, a thousand apprehensions as to the possible purport of his visit occurred to her; and, hardly knowing in what manner to meet him, she remained in her place, with the feelings of a criminal awaiting the sentence of his judge. But such alarming fears were soon dissipated—his manner was more than usually kind—she was his "dear Emmeline, his pretty daughter." He quite overcame Mrs. Benson with civilities, and was so very particular and anxious in his enquiries after Mr. Benson, and whether he could not have the pleasure of seeing him, that at last Emmeline thought it best to go and inform her father of his visit, hoping that Lord Arlingford's conciliatory manner might pacify his justly indignant feelings. When she told him who was in the drawing-room with her mother,——

"I know it—I know it quite well, child," said he, impatiently; "you need not have come for me; why did you not say I was out, or busy, or sick? I am sure you may say the last with truth, for I am not half the man I used to be. I don't want to see him; he is only come to try and palaver me over; and if I do go down to him, what in the world can we say to each other? Your marriage is the only thing we have talked about these last ten years, and the less now said of that the better, I am sure: and I am sore here," said the good old citizen, seizing on his waistcoat, and rubbing it across his breast; "and I don't want him to make matters worse. I wish his lordship had staid at home; for what the deuce can he be come here for?"

"For no unkind purpose, I am sure," said Emmeline, wishing to pacify her father—"for his manner to me is more than usually affectionate. For my sake, dear father, come down to him, and be cordial to him," said she, grasping his hand

with fervency, while her imploring eyes, fixed on his face, spoke all the feelings of heart.

"You are a silly girl, Emmy," said her father: "you have no proper pride. This abominable husband of yours has made a perfect fool of you; but go away to the drawing-room; say I will be down directly. Plague on him, he has turned me quite topsy-turvy."

Emmeline returned to Lord Arlingford, and was happy to find him and her mother conversing on indifferent subjects. In nervous agitation, she seated herself by them, listening with painful anxiety for her father's approach—while her eyes and ears were fixed on Lord Arlingford, eagerly watching for every look, every tone, that bore the slightest resemblance to his son. It is hard to say, whether there is most pain or pleasure in such recollections of a beloved object, but who can help catching at them? A glance, a word will sometimes make the heart start from a stupor of grief to which it had been reduced, and give it a passing sensation of something we, at the moment, mistake for happiness. So it was with Emmeline; and, lost in such thoughts, she sat gazing on the still handsome countenance of Lord Arlingford, till, hearing her father's step, she hastily rose, and walked towards the window, to conceal her nervous apprehensions as to the result of their meeting.

Mr. Benson entered the room, with a knit brow and both hands in his pockets; but Lord Arlingford's decided resolution to meet him cordially, at last forced one hand out of its repulsive retreat.

"I am glad to find our Emmeline looking better than I expected," said Lord Arlingford, a little at a loss for a subject to begin with—the coldness of Mr. Benson's look and manner having rather disconcerted him. "I heard she had left town on account of her health, the heat having been too much for her."

"I don't know what your lordship expected," said Mr.

Benson, surlily, "but Lady Fitzhenry can scarcely look worse than she does."

Lord Arlingford not seeming to heed the incivility of his answer, continued—"Ernest, too, did well to leave London, for he knocked himself up in the House of Commons. No constitution can stand it; and I was quite glad when I heard he had obtained *leave* and *absence* to take a little trip on the Continent, with his friend Mr. Pelham,"—and Lord Arlingford glanced at Emmeline, with a look which meant to express gallant pleasantry, but the anxiety which accompanied it was very perceptible.

Mr. Benson cleared his throat—seemed beating the time of some tune on his knee, and, after a moment's pause, said: "In my time, husbands and wives took those little trips together; but I presume that is no longer the fashion; at least, not at the west end of the town."

Lord Arlingford made no reply—but, turning to Emmeline —"I suppose you can hardly have heard from our travellers yet; that lazy boy, Ernest, has not written to me one word since he went. Indeed, it was the newspapers that first informed me of his departure; but, in truth, I believe the wind has been directly contrary for packets coming over. I never remember, at this time of the year, such a continuation of high winds; and those diplomatic people always travel *ventre à terre*, in order, I suppose, to give a vast opinion of their importance; so we must not be too severe on Fitzhenry."

Emmeline tried to speak; her nervous lips moved, but not a word could she articulate; and her mother, wishing to change the subject, made some remarks on the freshness and beauty of the country.

"Yes, indeed, it is particularly beautiful just now," said Arlingford; "and I do wonder how people can remain in town as they do; however, numbers have followed our wise example, and I thought the streets looked very dull and empty to-day, as I passed through. I suppose, Lady Fitzhenry, you

have no thoughts of returning to Grosvenor-Street, while Ernest is away. I dare say he would not trust you in the gay world of London without him," added he, laughing.

Emmeline, without raising her eyes from the carpet, on which they had been fixed, replied, that she meant to remain at Charlton some time longer.

There was a dead pause. Poor Mrs. Benson was painfully occupied in observing her daughter; and Mr. Benson seemed resolved on avoiding every thing like advances to his visitor, who, at last, was again forced to start a new subject. Taking, therefore, a desperate resolution to come at once to the point, and ascertain how matters were likely to be between him and the Benson family, or rather, between his son and daughter-in-law, he said, "the principal object of my visit to-day, was to try and persuade you all three to come and pay me a visit at Wimbledon. I am now quite alone, and it would really be a charity"—and he addressed himself particularly to Mr. Benson.

"You know I am a man of business, my lord," said he dryly—"my time is little at my own disposal. I cannot at present absent myself from home; and as for Emmeline, I do not think she is just now in a state to make any visits."

"But, coming to me," rejoined Lord Arlingford, with most determined civility and good humour, "would only be exchanging one home for another. My dear Emmeline, will you not indulge me?"

Emmeline made some answer, but her words were unintelligible. She saw, every minute, that Mr. Benson's temper was rising, and she shook from head to foot.

"Well, you will think of it, and let me know when you feel inclined to come," said Lord Arlingford, seeing it was useless to endeavour to press the matter any further—"and, perhaps, if we put it off a little, Mr. and Mrs. Benson will be able to accompany you."

Mr. Benson made no answer; he had left his seat, and was

restlessly fidgeting about the room. "So it shall remain that you write to me, and name your own day," added Lord Arlingford, rising.

"Yes, your lordship will shortly hear from me," said Mr. Benson, with a meaning, in his tone and manner, that Emmeline understood but too well; and, unasked, he rung the bell.

"Well, God bless you, my fair Emmeline," said Lord Arlingford, kissing her on both cheeks, with a sort of flirting gallantry of manner that was so habitual to him, that neither age nor the infirmities of sickness had altered it, and which he maintained even with his daughter-in-law. "Make haste and recover the roses which, I must confess, the dissipation of London has a little *flétri*, that Ernest may find you in bloom and beauty on his return; and we must mutually let each other know when we hear from him; I am the most interested in the bargain, as I think we can guess who will have the first intelligence."

Again Lord Arlingford forced Mr. Benson's reluctant hand into his, and overcoming Mrs. Benson with civil speeches, went to his carriage. Mr. Benson constrained himself so far as to accompany his visitor to the hall-door.

"By the bye, my dear Benson," said Lord Arlingford, stepping back just as he was entering the carriage, "when you do come, you shall find my horses to meet you in London, for it is too far to come the whole way with your own, and mine have positively nothing to do, so that it will be a kindness to give them a little exercise."

"Your lordship is very kind," said the banker, with an expression of irony, and ill concealed, offended pride on his countenance; "*whenever* I do visit you, I will certainly claim your obliging offer."

After Lord Arlingford had driven off, all remained for some time silent; at length Mr. Benson muttered to himself, "I see through it all—I am not the fool he takes me for—I am not

to be coaxed by a few civil speeches from a lord into mean forbearance. A fortnight more, and I shall most assuredly visit his lordship, and he shall see whom he has to deal with. *You*, Emmeline, I dare say, would wish to go and curry favour with him, that he may speak a word in your favour to his precious son, and you may, if you please; but I'll be d—d if I do, till it is to tell him a bit of my mind, and inform him, in pretty plain terms, that you and your husband are two, and that the law will give us redress."

And so saying, Mr. Benson left the room more irritated in temper than Emmeline had ever seen him. Her head fell on her hands, and her long-stifled feelings burst forth.

"Bear up, dearest Emmy," said her mother, endeavouring to soothe her; "surely this visit of Lord Arlingford's must, in many ways, give you comfort. He never would have come unless he had known that all was likely soon to be explained, and to end well between you and your husband."

Emmeline shook her head. "You don't know them as I do. No two beings can be so different, can act on such different motives, as Lord Arlingford and—— Fitzhenry." At that name, that beloved name, for the first time for long uttered by herself, she sobbed as if her heart would break. "And then my father," she continued, "he terrifies me. Oh! that he could, that he would, for my sake, be more patient, more conciliatory! He talks, too, always of pride, and forgets that one can have none where one loves as I do. Oh! If I could but see *him* once again!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands, "I believe I could on my knees entreat of him to be kind to me, to love me—I am so very miserable; and yet when I was with him, when I saw him every day, I was cold and repulsive, I know I was; I believe I was the most to blame. I dare say I could have won upon his kindness had I acted differently; for he is so kind to every body, every thing —but me. It must have been all my fault."

Thus did poor Emmeline comfort herself by voluntary self-

accusation, rather than impute blame to him she worshipped.

After the agitation occasioned by Lord Arlingford's visit had subsided, the family party at Charlton returned to their former melancholy composure. Day after day still passed, and no letter came; no intelligence reached them. Every ray of hope now vanished; all intercourse between Emmeline and the being on whom her existence hung, seemed now at an end for ever. Her father never alluded to the subject; but she had every reason to think that he still kept to his resolution of demanding an explanation; and indeed their formal and total separation seemed now almost unavoidable. Even Pelham, her best friend, seemed to have forgotten her; and thus deserted, the few past months of her life, during which all the feelings of her heart had been roused, and a new existence had been opened to her, seemed a dream of delirium. All had vanished. Apparently, also, neglected by that gay world which so lately courted her with all its most intoxicating blandishments, the admired, flattered Lady Fitzhenry had again sunk into Emmeline Benson, and was living in all the retired concealment of guilt, without one fault, one folly to be laid to her charge.

Perhaps some of her fashionable friends when they chanced to drive through Grosvenor-Street, and when their attention was attracted by the closed windows of Lord Fitzhenry's house, at that season of the year when every open London balcony is gay with dear-bought sooty flowers, might, as they cast up their eyes on the deserted habitation, wonder what had become of its inmates, and what might be the most like truth of the many stories which were for some days circulated about them.

But after those few days, the daily business of amusement, and some new tale of scandal, soon superseded that of the Fitzhenry's; their vacant places were soon filled up at those meetings of pleasure to which they had been invited; and *he* was allowed quietly to prosecute his journey on the Conti-

nent, and *she* to drag on her melancholy existence within nine miles of all her former associates, unmolested and unthought of. Who then would sacrifice happiness or comfort to the opinion of the world? Often the sacrifice of a whole life to the idle talk of a day!

One evening, when the Benson family were as usual sitting together in mournful silence, which was only at times broken by some forced remark from Mrs. Benson, as she at dismally at her work, her husband having had recourse to his usual amusement, the newspapers, the latter looking suddenly towards Emmeline, said: "At last I see the abominable west wind has changed, and has allowed vessels to get across the Channel: no less than four French mails are due. Emmy, dear girl, cheer up," added he, patting her cheek as he spoke; "there is no saying what news these mails may bring, for I dreamt last night——"

Mr. Benson was here interrupted in his intended story by a loud ringing at the door-bell; he started up and hurried out of the room. No one spoke, but all had the same idea—all fancied it could only be Lord Fitzhenry. Mrs. Benson laid down her work, and moved towards the hall. Emmeline alone sat immoveable. Her father was at the house-door, and opened it before any servant could reach it. She heard the trampling of a horse on the threshold—heard a voice in brief communication with him. A footstep approached the room—she fixed her eyes wildly on the door, scarcely able to breathe. But again she had to endure the torture of disappointment—Mr. Benson entered alone, with a letter in his hand, brought, he said, by a man on horseback, who had orders to deliver it with all speed. The letter was for Emmeline, and the direction was in Pelham's hand-writing. She hastily broke the seal, and while every pulse in her heart and in her head throbbed, she read these words:

"You would have heard from us before, but Fitzhenry has

been ill—indeed is so still. We are here at Paris delayed on our journey. If you could (I need hardly add, if you would), I should wish you to set off immediately, on receiving this, to join us. Trust me, I would urge nothing that I was not certain was for your and your husband's *mutual* good. At Dover you will find a vessel ready to bring you over, and my own courier to accompany you, who will prevent all delays and difficulties. Lose no time. Fitzhenry has had a most violent and alarming fever; but to-day, I think, there is some decided amendment — the medical people are now sanguine. God bless you.

"G. PELHAM."

Emmeline held out the letter to her father, while her full heart relieved itself by tears; when he had read it, without looking at her, he said: "Well, how do you mean to act?"

"How!" said Emmeline, breathless with agitation, "why set off directly."

"I don't know that I shall agree to that," answered Mr. Benson, with the same forced *sang froid*. "In this business you are not fit to judge for yourself, and I must consider for you."

Emmeline grasped her father's arm, endeavouring to catch his averted eyes: "Dear father! I think you have never yet had reason to doubt my obedience to your will, so you must now forgive me for saying, that no power on earth shall prevent my going to my husband. My only chance for happiness in this world, duty, every thing, in short, calls me to him. Do not, I entreat, forbid me, for I could not obey you."

"But," rejoined Mr. Benson, rather impatiently, "it is not your husband that sends for you. Mr. Pelham does not even say that he knows of his writing to you; and I am sure he would make the very best of the matter, for he seems to be a kind, friendly sort of man."

"Indeed he is," answered Emmeline; "and indeed I can trust

to him. He would not have written for me had he not been sure it was *his* wish. Dearest father, I must, I will set off directly; and do not let me go with the pain of your displeasure."

Mrs. Benson joined her arguments to Emmeline's entreaties, bringing in, with excusable artifice, something about the duty and devotion of a wife, till, at last, Mr. Benson seemed somewhat moved; and a glance which he caught of Emmeline's face crimsoned with agitation and animated with painful anxiety, completely overcoming his intended firmness, he opened his arms to his trembling daughter: "Well, well, you women always get the better, always make fools of us men. The truth is, I am heartily tired of your dismal face, Emmy, and of all this weeping and wailing—that is the truth of it; so e'en take your own way, so that we may be all happy again. But I can tell you, positively you shall not go alone, child; at all events, *I will* go with you to Dover."

"But directly, dear father—no delay—the happiness or misery of my life may depend on an hour—now, this very night, let me set off."

"Oh! as for that, I am always for dispatch, you know. If a thing is to be done, let it be done directly, that is my saying. There is no fear of John Benson dawdling."

And the good-hearted old man, rubbing his hands, hurried out of the room to give the necessary orders.

In an instant, all was bustle in the house. Mr. Benson himself paced away to the stables to hasten the harnessing of the horses; and Emmeline, a few minutes before inanimate and almost lifeless, now, with a flushed cheek, restlessly paced the hall and drawing-room, impatient at every moment's delay. She hardly knew whether she had most cause for dread or hope from the contents of Mr. Pelham's letter. Fitzhenry was ill—plainly very ill; and, as her father said, it was not even hinted that it was by his desire she had been summoned; but still she thought she could trust in that kind, considerate

friend; and the idea, the delightful idea, that in a few days she would again behold Fitzhenry, got the better of every other thought.

While Emmeline was thus counting every second till the carriage came to the door, Mrs. Benson busied herself in those necessary preparations for the journey, which her pre-occupied daughter never thought of. At last, by midnight, all was ready; and followed by the blessings and good wishes of her mother, Emmeline set off with her father for Dover.

"I shall come back to you, perhaps, the happiest of human beings," said she, as she returned Mrs. Benson's fond embrace—"perhaps——" She had not courage to finish the sentence.

"Foolish girl!" said her father, as he helped her into the carriage; "no more whimpering. Now shut the door; bid the man drive on: and you, Mrs. Benson, my good woman, do you go away to your bed. Pretty wild doings these! This comes of connecting oneself with quality!"

The horses set off; and the rapidity with which they went, the feeling that she was hurrying to the object of all her wishes, and the fresh air of a fine summer's night, all helped to compose and revive poor Emmeline; so that, at Dover, Mr. Benson, with a lightened heart, resigned her to the care of Mr. Pelham's courier, whom they found there waiting her orders. Her father offered himself to go on with her to Paris, but that she for many reasons declined; and at last he consented to return to Charlton. He first of all, however, went with her down to the beach, saw her safe into the boat that was to convey her to the vessel, and, from the pier, watched its white sails as long as he could, with his glass, distinguish his daughter on the deck, waving her many a farewell with his handkerchief. At last, his dear Emmy became a speck, and vanished. The good man, then, brushing away a tear from his eye, and ejaculating to himself a benediction on

his darling, returned alone to the inn, and resumed his journey homewards.

## CHAPTER XII.

Mercy, dear Lord, saide he, what grace is this
That thou hast shewed to me, sinfull wight,
To send thine angell from her bowre of bliss
To comfort me in my distressed plight?
Angell, or goddess, doe I call thee right?
What service may I doe unto thee meete,
That hast from darkness me returned to light?

*Faery Queene*, Canto 5.

With all superior characters, such as Emmeline's, the mind so supports the body, that, for the time, it is rather strengthened than exhausted by exertion. Although her health had been impaired, and her nerves much weakened, by all she had lately undergone—yet, fearless of fatigue, she travelled on without stopping, and arrived in Paris on the evening of the third day from that on which she had left Charlton.

On entering the barriers, her heart almost ceased to beat; and when she drove into the court-yard of the hotel to which the courier directed the postilions, a death-like cold crept over her frame. But at the door, she saw Mr. Pelham; and the smile with which he welcomed her again gave her life.

"He is safe; he is out of danger;" he hastily said, as he ventured to receive in his arms Emmeline's almost inanimate form, and pressed her, as a brother would a beloved sister, to his heart.

"Will he see me?" said Emmeline, looking still doubtfully in Mr. Pelham's face.

"Soon, very soon," said he; "but you must compose your-

self first; the least agitation must be spared him." And he led her up stairs to Fitzhenry's apartments.

"Did he send for me?" said Emmeline timidly, as soon as her agitation allowed her to speak.

"My dear Lady Fitzhenry," replied Pelham, "I never have deceived you, and will not do so now; Fitzhenry did *not* send for you; did not even know of my writing. At that time, in truth, I despaired of his life; but I know my friend well enough to be convinced, that had he had a moment's composure, he would have been glad to have had it in his power to demand and obtain your forgiveness. It has pleased Heaven to give a more favourable issue to this illness than I then had dared to anticipate. Fitzhenry is now pronounced out of danger, but he is in a state of weakness that, of course, has necessarily precluded all conversation on that, or any other subject. Therefore your presence here is no way expected by him."

Poor Emmeline's countenance fell;—a thousand vague hopes and expectations were in an instant crushed!

Pelham observed her emotion, and added: "I cannot attempt to excuse my friend's conduct; a strange infatuation has blinded him, and, for a time, clouded his better nature; but I am much mistaken if that fatal madness is not entirely and for ever at an end."

All must know how hard it is to bear the blank feeling of disappointment when we have (even unreasonably) raised our hopes as to some desired bliss. Emmeline had pictured to herself her husband changed—penitent—receiving her to his heart; and when she learnt the real truth, she almost lost the sense of happiness at his safety, in the bitter feeling, that even though her rival's reign was over, still *she* had never been thought of by him. She covered her face with her hands, while tears of mortification slowly stole down her cheeks.

Meanwhile, the servants had unloaded the carriage; and, as she heard it driving out of the court-yard, Emmeline, in the

humiliating pain of disappointed feelings, almost resolved instantly to leave Paris, again return to her father, and not force herself upon one who evidently wished not for her.

With this idea, she suddenly rose from her seat. "I will see him once more," said she in a hurried manner: "could I not unseen follow you into his room? I will not speak to him—he shall not see or hear me—I will leave him directly, and for ever——" she added; but in so low a voice that Pelham did not catch the words; and, attributing all her agitation to anxiety about her husband's safety, and thinking that nothing but beholding him would satisfy her as to his existence, he drew her arm within his, and led the way to Fitzhenry's bed-room.

On opening the door, the darkness seemed so total, every window being closed, that Emmeline, satisfied she could not be observed, followed Mr. Pelham to the bed-side; the curtain was down, so that she could not see Fitzhenry's face, but merely heard him breathe; by degrees, as her eyes got used to the obscurity, and judging, by his immoveable stillness, that he had not observed their entrance, she ventured gently to put the curtain aside and look on him. But to the fond eye of love alone was he the same Fitzhenry from whom she had parted scarcely a month before. His eyes were closed; his cheek was sunk and colourless; his brown curly hair fell lank on his pale forehead, which was contracted with the expression of suffering.

The sight was too much for her, and totally overcame her recently-formed resolution of leaving him for ever. She sunk on her knees at his side; her hand fell on his, which lay apparently lifeless on the bed; and, in the agony of her feelings, careless of consequences, she covered with tears and with kisses that hand which she had never before dared to touch; but which now felt not her fervent lips; was insensible to her burning tears, and lay passive within hers.

Emmeline remained fixed at the bedside of her husband.

The former unhappiness of their connexion, his indifference and even apparent dislike, her own punctilious distance of manner toward him, all seemed now forgotten by her. In trembling anxiety, she watched each heaving of his bosom, each movement of his languid limbs; and how her heart throbbed the first time his lips moved, and that she heard his voice! It was weak and hollow; but still it was that voice which thrilled to her inmost soul;. he expressed a wish for something to moisten his parched mouth; Pelham brought the glass to Emmeline; her trembling hand was steadied when she held it to his lips, while she put her arm round him to support his head.

She now seemed his established sick nurse: what she should do when his amendment allowed him to know who it was that was attending upon him, never was talked of, indeed was never thought of by Emmeline. To be allowed to see him constantly, to perform for him the offices of affection, was such happiness that she would not destroy it by venturing to look forward. She gave him all his medicines. Sometimes, unconscious what he did, he took hold of her hand, and held it long within his; but, exhausted apparently by his illness, he never opened his eyes, never enquired what he took, nor from whose hands he received it. The physicians, however, assured Emmeline, that this insensibility was merely the natural consequence of the violence of the fever through which he had struggled, that they hourly saw some amendment, and found increased strength of pulse.

On the second evening after her arrival, he had sunk into something more like natural sleep than the state of stupor in which he had hitherto lain. Fearful of moving, and thereby of disturbing him, Pelham had taken hold of the first book he could reach, and was reading it by the light of the lamp in the sick room. Emmeline was sitting at the foot of the bed, with her eyes fixed on her husband's countenance, for it was serene and calm, and had more of its own natural expression

than she had yet seen. At length he moved, passed his hand over his eyes, which then rested on Emmeline, and endeavoured to raise himself. She saw that sensibility had returned; and not daring to advance towards him herself, she made sign to Mr. Pelham to come to him.

"Where am I?" exclaimed Fitzhenry.—"I have been very ill, Pelham, have I not? I have no recollection—indeed, my head is still confused. I could even now fancy," continued he, staring wildly on Emmeline, "that I see Lady Fitzhenry before me."

"Yes, dear Fitzhenry," replied his friend, "you have been ill—long very ill; but you are now pronounced to be quite convalescent, and a few more days will, I trust, restore you even to strength."

"But my head is so weak—you will laugh at me, Pelham—but I repeat it—I could swear that at this moment I see Lady Fitzhenry quite plainly sitting at the end of my bed; but I suppose it is all weakness, and that such odd delusions will go off—but how very strange such fancies are!"

"Would you wish it to be no fancy?" said Pelham calmly: "would you like your delirious vision to be realized?"

"Oh, Pelham, why do you talk in that way to me? you will only confuse my poor brain still more—you too well know how impossible it is."

"Do you still fancy you see her?" said Pelham.

"Still—still: it is her very countenance, her melancholy expression; and she looks at me now—I almost fancy I see her breathe and move—Oh! Pelham, for God's sake give me something to rouse me out of this miserably nervous state;" and Fitzhenry covered his eyes with both his hands.

"Fitzhenry," said Pelham, in a slow but tremulous voice, frightened at the possible effect of that which he was going to impart,—"what if I were to tell you that this is no sick dream—but that the figure before you, is in truth and reality Lady Fitzhenry, your Emmeline?"

Fitzhenry gave a violent start, and grasped Pelham's hand —"Good God! Lady Fitzhenry in reality, here —Speak to her Pelham—I dare not, cannot."

Poor Emmeline, trembling with anxiety, had not courage to move or utter a single word, and during all this conversation had appeared the phantom her husband had taken her for.

"Fitzhenry!" said Pelham, "compose yourself; you have nothing to fear from Lady Fitzhenry; affection alone brought her, here—and you will at last be convinced, that far from being hated, you are loved as few can hope to be."

"Is it possible! do you not deceive me? said Fitzhenry, eagerly, a faint smile playing on his lips as he turned towards Emmeline. But she still, doubting her happiness, remained immoveable.

"What, Emmeline!" said he, "cannot you forgive me?"

At that name, at those words, all fear forsook her; he held out to her his feeble arms, and she rushed to his heart; his head fell on her bosom; and, overcome with his feelings, he wept like a child. In a few minutes, he recovered himself, and gazing in her face, their eyes met.

Oh! who can describe the happiness of that moment. Emmeline read affection in those eyes which she had never before dared to encounter; and when Fitzhenry again pressed her to his heart, and, half timidly, kissed her burning cheek, —at that minute she almost could have wished to breathe her last, so perfect was her bliss.

Such emotion, however, was not good for the invalid; and Pelham forced Emmeline for a time to leave the room, till she had recovered the power to endure her happiness with composure. When she returned, she again took her station, in silence, by his bed-side. Fitzhenry seized her hand, held it in both of his, but spoke not. One minute, one look, however, had sufficed to open their hearts to each other; no explanation was necessary; indeed, Emmeline would have

been fearful of breaking the dream of felicity in which she now lived, by one word recalling the past.

Fitzhenry now daily seemed to gain strength. Occasionally, a short cough, which the physicians pronounced to be nervous, tormented him by disturbing his rest; but his eyes looked less languid. At times, some colour returned to his cheeks; and supported by cushions, he could now sit up on a couch. And what a delight it was to Emmeline to wait upon him, to watch and prevent his wishes; to smooth his pillow, and receive in return a smile of kindness and gratitude!

Sometimes, however, a cloud would darken her present happiness. If Fitzhenry was more than usually silent or thoughtful (and he now often fell into long fits of deep abstraction), then her jealous fancy pictured to her that his thoughts and affections were wandering back to Lady Florence. When he talked of England, of his wish to return home, again she took alarm; and, in spite of herself, interpreted his anxiety on the subject into the desire again to be in the same country with her rival—perhaps, indeed, again to return to her chains.

Lady Florence had never yet been in any way alluded to —Fitzhenry seemed to shun the subject as much as Emmeline; so that she hardly knew her fate, hardly knew by how strong, or how feeble a tenure she held her present felicity.

One day, however, he suddenly seemed to summon courage for some sort of explanation between them. Emmeline had, as usual, been arranging his sofa. Her hand still lingered on the pillow which supported him; and, after gazing on it a minute, he seized it, and looking attentively on her wedding-ring—

"Emmeline," said he, "give me back that ring, you shall wear it no more; it was one *de mauvaise augure*, and shall in future live on my hand for a memento, like Prince Cheri's. I will marry you over again with *this*."

And, with a half melancholy smile, he drew from his finger a small fretted gold ring, which appeared to have been intended for a woman. At the same time, apparently repeating some words to himself, he put in its place that which he had taken off Emmeline's hand. "Give me a prayer-book," said he; "and look for the marriage ceremony, for I have forgotten what I then promised."

When he got the book, he read it to himself for some time in silence.

"Good God!" he at length exclaimed, "did I pronounce these words? did I make those vows? villain that I was! Emmeline, can you forgive the past?"

"Oh! do not talk of the past," she eagerly exclaimed; "I am too happy now to wish to think of it."

"But what an awful account I shall have to give," added he, again casting his eyes on the book recording his solemn engagement with God.

"Dearest Fitzhenry!" said Emmeline, sinking on her knees beside him, "a God of mercy will forgive all."

"Pray to him for me," said he, in a low tone; "I fear I cannot. I never prayed!"

Emmeline shuddered, she seized his hand: "Oh! Fitzhenry, talk not so wildly; God is now calling you to him, shrink not from him."

Fitzhenry pressed her hand; again took the prayer-book, and with a tremulous voice read these words:

"I, Ernest, take thee, Emmeline, to my wedded wife, to love and to cherish; and forsaking all other, keep myself only unto thee as long as we both shall live; and thereto I plight thee my troth."

The last words died on his lips, and closing his eyes, he sank back, seemingly both affected and exhausted. Emmeline was too much moved to speak: she pressed to her lips and to her heart, that hand now a second time given her—but in how different a manner!

From that day, Emmeline's prayer-book was his constant companion. She saw his mind was deeply affected, and left the strong impression to work its own effect.

## CHAPTER XIII.

——————Whilst I remember
Thee, and thy virtues, I cannot forget
My blemishes in them; and so still think of
The wrong I did myself.

*Winter's Tale.*

A FEW days after the scene recorded in the last chapter, when Fitzhenry appeared better than he had yet done since his illness, and that he had even some of his own natural and playful cheerfulness, "Lady Fitzhenry," said he, with a smile, "how long is it since you have liked me—*loved* me?" added he faintly, colouring.

Emmeline coloured too. "Oh! I can't remember," said she; "I tried to hate you, for I felt it my duty to myself to do so; but somehow, from the very first, I could not."

"How strange!" continued Fitzhenry; "I should not have thought I could have been so very blind and stupid. Our sex is pretty clear-sighted where our vanity is concerned; but I suppose I was so conscious that I deserved to be hated by you, that I convinced myself I was so; and every, even the slightest occurrence, confirmed me more and more in this opinion. Perhaps too I felt (at first at least) that it was an ease to my conscience to think you disliked me, trying to persuade myself in that manner that we were quits. Pelham, when he came to Arlingford, soon saw how things were, and took me to task —he had known me long; known all my history."

Fitzhenry paused: at length, resuming in a lower, graver

tone—"Emmeline! my wife!" said he, "I must ease my mind by confessing all to you. I have loved—madly loved—it was a delirium, an intoxication, an infatuation—but on my honour, before God!" and he fervently clasped his hands together —"before God, I swear it is over. My esteem, my admiration, all is now, indeed has long been, yours."

Fitzhenry had left out the word love; and Emmeline missed it. She turned away her face from her husband, but not so quick as to prevent his observing the change in her countenance; and, drawing her towards him, he (smiling) added, "And my love too." Still Emmeline kept her eyes averted. "Listen to my story," said Fitzhenry, "and then you will believe me. I need not tell you in what a pretty humour I was married. Good God! when I recollect the state of mind in which I was—that dreadful day—I really now wonder how I got through it all as well as I did.

"I resolved on civil indifference towards you; and, at the beginning, it was easy enough to keep to my resolution, although from the first, your conduct astonished and consequently interested me. I expected reproaches, sullenness, or childish repinings, and complaint, but found sweetness, good sense, and delicacy. Emmeline! I could swear that you never in your life suffered as I did that morning after our marriage, when I had to encounter you in the breakfast-room. You held out your hand to me—there was a smile on your face, that went to my heart as a dagger. That day however over, my thoughts and feelings returned into their former channel, and I was so entirely engrossed by them, that my remorse died away. I persuaded myself I behaved vastly well to you, and that you thoroughly deserved that fate which you had brought on yourself. The civil indifference which I determined to maintain in my conduct towards you, soon, however, became difficult to pursue. There was sometimes an archness in your smiles—in your look and manner—an appearance of reading my thoughts, and laughing at the awk-

ward situation in which I had placed myself, that piqued me, and made me almost in awe of you. I was often, too, I am ashamed to say it, provoked with you for your patient good humour, for not seeming to feel my abominable conduct towards you more. But, at others, I found *you* whom I had resolved to disregard—to dislike—to my surprise, I found you (forgive the seeming impertinence of the expression) a most intelligent, conversible companion; and more than once I caught myself owning how agreeable you were.

"But although such thoughts at times occupied me, still my affections were so strongly engaged—my whole soul so enthralled by mad passion, that they were but passing thoughts; the impression, as yet, was not deep. I then left home for some time, and returned to you with all my old feelings strengthened. I had renewed all my vows of constancy, of fidelity to another, perfectly regardless of the solemn, sacred engagement, into which I had entered with you —(profligate, unprincipled villain that I was!) Wishing to avoid, in future, the possibility of a *tête-à-tête* with you, I had invited several friends to meet me at Arlingford, on my return there. I thought that, by that means, we might avoid even the common intimacy produced by living under the same roof, and meeting daily, as I flattered myself that you would be lost in the mass. But that plan failed. I heard your name, your praises, from every one and every where. Your voice always attracted my attention, and the very resolution to slight, and dislike you, made me constantly occupied about you.

"Among the party then at Arlingford, you remember, was Pelham. He had come to England, on purpose to see me, and to make your acquaintance. Knowing my former history, he had, as a true friend, rejoiced at my marriage, for I had basely concealed from him the circumstances that had attended it, fearing his strict integrity; but, when living with us, it was impossible for him long to remain ignorant of our real situation. I was forced to confess all to him; and he did

not spare me. He persecuted me eternally with your perfections. I allowed that you possessed sense, acquirements, gentleness, most pleasing manners; but I insisted upon your total want of feeling, on your having no heart; and I brought, as proofs of my assertions, your apparent perfect contentment under circumstances that would have roused the anger, if not broken the heart, of any woman who had a particle of sensibility. Even on that point he would not give way; and one evening, while the whole party were busily employed in dancing, and you were engaged at the piano-forte, we were discussing the subject pretty warmly (something that had passed having given rise to it), and Pelham was maintaining you were *even* much *attached* to *me;* when a break in the music, a sudden burst of voices, and your name often repeated, made me turn round, and I beheld you in apparent gaiety of heart, waltzing joyously by yourself—'Look there,' said I to Pelham (with the true selfish pride and impertinence of man), 'look at the sentimental girl, who is dying for love of me.'

"Pelham stared at you in astonishment. He was silenced; for, at that moment, I am sure he read you as little aright as myself. As for me, I at first looked at you in scorn; but other feelings soon succeeded. You were, at that minute, perfectly beautiful; there was a look of wild enjoyment, a brilliancy in your complexion, a grace in your person, that fixed my attention, and, in spite of myself, forced my admiration. I had never seen any one (any *but one*), waltz so well: at that moment, I almost thought I had never seen any one so lovely. The truth was, I seldom before had ever looked at you attentively, for I feared to encounter your eyes, and somehow they always instantly seemed to know when mine were directed towards you.

"For an instant, I was lost in admiration, as I followed your light form round the room; so I suppose was Pelham, for our argument seemed totally forgotten by us both. Suddenly you came up to me, and seized my arm. Had the

marble statue left its pedestal, and done the same, I could scarcely have started more violently beneath its grasp. I was altogether so thrown off my guard, that I hardly knew what to say or do. Your conduct surprised (I must own), even disgusted me; I thought it was no subject for a *joke*, and that there was a want of delicacy in thus braving me. You may remember I was made to waltz with you."

Emmeline's deep crimson showed she remembered it well.

Fitzhenry pressed her hand, which he held still more closely, and continued—"It seemed to me to be all a concerted plan to torment me; my momentary trance of admiration was dispelled, and was succeeded by feelings very opposite. You then appeared to me to endeavour, by old and hacknied arts of coquetry, to attract my attention: you fell almost entirely into my arms; you laid your head on my shoulder, and complained of faintness. I cannot describe the strange mixture of feelings which at that moment took possession of me—for though, even then, I fancied I disliked you, yet, I verily believe regret and disappointment were uppermost on discovering (as I thought I then did) the common-place, artful nature of your character. To extricate myself from you was, however, my first object; and under pretext of gallant attention, I directly left the room to procure a glass of water.

"In truth, your indisposition was evidently not feigned, for you were as pale as death; but in my vexation I would not own that even to myself. I was in a devil of a humour all that evening. The next day Moore made that foolish piece of work about the brooch (which circumstance, by the bye, I still don't comprehend); however, I know well that I wrote you some *impertinence*. What, I don't recollect, and I suspect I had better not remember. It seemed to me that you and Moore were in a league to plague and provoke me; and I hated you both most cordially. I felt it was impossible to go on in this way; and, to put an end to the whole thing, I pretended sudden and violent zeal for the welfare of my country,

and announced my intention to go early to town, to attend parliament. But it was not politics which took me there; nor did I, as I believe I basely let you imagine, pass my days and nights in the House of Commons.

"But my conscience was perfectly at rest, for your conduct then seemed to sanction mine. You plunged madly into dissipation, and for days together, although living under the same roof, we often did not meet. I believe I again gave a sigh when I thought how I had been mistaken in your character, for I had fancied there was, at least, nothing of frivolity in it, and had frequently been forced to confess to myself, that had I been free, and to choose one who would have suited me as a wife (barring your supposed want of feeling and tenderness of nature), I should have chosen you. On the whole, however, I rejoiced at your apparent levity of disposition. I felt as if I thus regained my liberty, and that your follies excused my faults. It seemed to me that it was by mutual consent that we then each went our own way. But mine was no longer one of pleasantness. I felt—and yet the feeling was pain—I felt I did not love as I had done. I saw her as she was, wanting all that beauty of innocence, of virtue, which you so eminently possessed; but, still infatuated, I sought her society although the charm was gone.

"We had not been long in town, however, before a strange madness came over me. I hardly know how, or when it began. You had general success—were universally admired; but I fancied that *Pelham in particular admired you;* and, when once that thought had taken possession of my mind, every trifling circumstance gave it additional certainty; till one night, at Almacks, I surprised you together in such earnest conversation, and in such evident emotion, that I had no longer a doubt left on the subject. Although I had voluntarily rejected your affections, and repulsed you from me, yet I could not bear that another should awaken feelings which I had tried to persuade myself you did

not possess. I really believe I was vain and ridiculous enough to want you to love me, when I had no intention of returning the partiality, and certainly made no attempt to inspire it. I had sought Pelham that evening, having something of consequence to say to him; but when I saw you, I totally forgot my errand. I looked at you stedfastly, to try and read your heart. You blushed deeply. How can I own my folly, my perverseness, my inconsistency! I gazed on you in jealousy! for I then saw and acknowledged your attractions: I saw that your smiles, your gaiety, your bloom was gone. I saw that some secret sorrow had changed the character of your countenance, had altered the whole tone of your mind, and of your manners. But, every way totally deceived, I never once dreamt I was the cause of that sorrow.

"At Easter, I would not go to Arlingford, for if I had, there could have been no reason why you, why Pelham, should not have accompanied me, and I did not feel that I could have stood the trial. So I went to Mostyn Hall; but, on my honour, it was more to avoid you, and Pelham, than to seek her; for all was there changed. Suspicion and discontent now poisoned our intercourse; and when I called to mind your gentleness, your feminine *home* perfections, she fell still lower in the comparison. I was then summoned home on account of poor Reynolds's illness; she ridiculed my feelings for him; but, for the first time, I disregarded her raillery, I resisted her allurements, and set off directly for Arlingford. You may imagine what was the effect produced on my mind, when on opening the door of the invalid's room, I beheld you kneeling by the bed of my old servant. I had no idea you were at Arlingford. I had left you apparently engrossed by the world and its dissipation. Indeed, according to the suspicions of my jealous fancy, by still more powerful attractions, and could hardly believe my senses. Oh! how my heart at that minute smote me for my hasty and seemingly unjust judgment of you.

"Poor Reynolds, you may remember, joined our hands;

an unaccountable fear, shyness, I know not what, came over me. I had not courage to retain your hand when you withdrew it from mine; I felt you were a being too pure, too good for me; and I allowed you to fly from me. Reynolds talked to me much about you—told me long stories about your goodness, your affection for me—about having found you gazing on my picture, and I know not what; but I fancied his mind began to wander; that I could not trust to what he said; in short, I would not be convinced, although I wished it. But still his exhortations, the awfulness of the scene, and my own accusing conscience, all combined to work on my feelings; and I resolved, the first moment I could, to leave him to go to you, seek an explanation, and implore your forgiveness.

"When I reached your door for that purpose, my heart beat with various contending feelings. I hardly knew what I said; I longed to fall at your feet, to ask you to forgive and love me. A word, a look of kindness on your part would then have fixed our fate—one smile, and I should have caught you to my heart—been yours for ever. But I found you cold, distant, and for the first time, since I had known you, even irritated and repulsive. There were traces of tears on your face, which you endeavoured to hide from me; your whole mannner betrayed emotion and feelings, which you wished to conceal. I saw then, as I thought, but too plainly, how it was—all combined to deceive me. Mrs. Osterley's thoughtless hints came to my mind, and confirmed me in my suppositions. I fancied that the case was hopeless. My pride then closed both my heart and lips, and I would not confess to you feelings which I was convinced you could not now return.

"As I was leaving you, by accident your hair—one of these beautiful long ringlets—got entangled on the button of my coat sleeve. Had you been forced to touch a serpent, you could not have recoiled from it with more horror than you did from me. Do you remember all that, Lady Fitzhenry? and pray how do you explain your conduct?" said he, smiling.

"In the whole of your supposed love-story, for 'Pelham' read 'Ernest,'" answered Emmeline, in a low voice, as she hid her face on his shoulder, "and all will be fully explained."

"What a pity it was, that we were both so proud or so stupid!" continued Fitzhenry, sighing deeply as he gazed on her in tenderness: "I was both, and left you in anger; although, I confess, I had little right to take the matter up in that manner. The next day, provoked with you, with myself, miserable every way, I would not attempt to detain you at Arlingford, though I ardently wished it; I only read impatience to return to Pelham in your resolved departure, and would not for the world have allowed you to think I wished you to remain. I remember, however, that as you drove from the door, you cast back one look—one melancholy look, which shot as a ray of light through my heart (for I was watching you from my room); had I been at the door, I believe, even then I should have endeavoured to stop you; but before I had time to decide, you drove off. I then persuaded myself that the look of regret which I had fancied I had seen on your countenance was mere fancy; I took your thus leaving me as declared war on your part; and, when I joined you in town, I determined that my conduct should be such as (fool, idiot, that I was!) I thought befitting my pride and honour—fine sounding words, which I put in the place of selfishness and passion.

"In consequence of this resolution, I totally neglected you; we ceased almost entirely to speak to each other when we did chance to meet, and I returned in desperation to your rival. I endeavoured in her society to forget every thing, to banish from my mind you Emmeline, my friends, and all the dreams of happiness—of domestic happiness which now eternally haunted me. But in vain! the fascination of her society was gone—we were both changed; it was impossible to recall feelings which truth had destroyed. She could not again blind me; suspicion made her *exigeante*—her thraldom be-

came insupportable; my feelings, my temper, both were irritated beyond my control; my mind was sick, as my body now is."

For a minute or two, Fitzhenry hid his face in his hands, and seemed lost in no pleasing recollections; at length, after a deep-drawn sigh (whether of regret or repentance Emmeline could not decide), he continued:

"I now come to the last and the worst part of my story. I would fain forget it all; but Emmeline, you shall know the very worst; shall be aware what a hot-headed fool you have to deal with, and then you must still love me if you can. I think I need hardly ask, if you remember a certain Saturday night at the opera. By accident, I happened to know, that you had, that night, given away your box; and, therefore, feeling secure you would not be there, had agreed to accompany Lady Florence; for, abominably as I had behaved, you must do me the justice to allow, I never so far insulted you as openly before you to be seen with your rival; how much certain selfish feelings and awkward uncomfortable sensations of shame influenced me, I will not pretend to say. Well, I joined Lady Florence. After I had been with her a few minutes, she carelessly told me, she believed she had seen you. I directly looked round to the box which she said she had observed you enter; but, not being able to distinguish you, I was satisfied that she must have been mistaken. Presuming on her former power, she then spoke of you. I could not bear to hear your name in her mouth; I felt it almost an insult to myself. She spoke too of you with a sort of ridicule and levity that disgusted me; she hinted attachment between you and Pelham, and seemed to enjoy the pain she saw she was inflicting. Although a smile was on her lips, yet her eyes flashed fire—the fire of jealousy and revenge. This, in the present state of my feelings, was not to be endured. I dared not speak; I knew too well also the violence of her temper; it was not the moment for a *scene*, and I said not a word; but still, there I re-

mained, as if spell-bound. My mind was, however, busily at work, and I formed many resolutions for extricating myself from my present miserable situation. You then rose to my imagination, gay, blooming, gentle, artless, as you were when I first took you to Arlingford; when I had sworn to love and protect you; and had then basely repulsed, and abandoned to your hard fate. My conscience smote me sorely. I felt how greatly I had injured you; that, young and inexperienced as you were, I had, by my cruelty and neglect, driven you into danger. I thought, perhaps, you still had not wandered so far, but that your affections might yet be recalled. On my honour, Emmeline, infatuated as I was, I had then no doubt of your innocence, your purity, your virtue. Nor could I even bring myself to suspect Pelham's honour. That you loved each other, I did not doubt; but I respected you both too much to think I had been injured by you. I resolved, in short, that, on that very night, we should open our hearts to each other; that all should be explained between us. I determined to propose to you, Emmeline, to leave town with me—to leave England directly, and by mutual forgiveness, to make up for the past, and begin a new life of penitence—I hoped finally of happiness. Lost in these thoughts, I sat unconscious of what was passing around me, till the falling of the curtain roused me from my trance. Lady Florence then seized my arm. She saw she had displeased me; feared she had gone too far, and would not quit her hold. When we reached the lobby, I saw you and Pelham. I hurried her down stairs in the opposite direction; but she had seen you too, and I could distinguish a smile of triumph on her countenance.

"What happened afterwards you know. The two carriages had got entangled, for your coachman, Emmeline, was fighting your battle for you, and contending with Lady Florence Mostyn's. In the confusion I caught a glimpse of you, at the moment when she had fallen back into my arms. I heard the coarse jokes of the mob of footmen as your carriage drove

off. I was nearly frantic. Florence had been slightly hurt, was still frightened, and nervous. I could not be so brutal as to leave her in that state. I went home with her. I meant calmly, kindly, to speak to her; to represent the misery of our intercourse—in short, to open my heart to her. But the instant she suspected my meaning—overpowered by her passions, her fury knew no bounds, nor her envenomed malice and jealousy towards you. My blood fired—a violent scene ensued. I left her in anger—and fully resolved, for ever."

Fitzhenry had latterly spoken so quick, that he paused for a minute, as if exhausted and overcome by his feelings; but Emmeline was too much interested and agitated by the narration to make any comment; and, after a moment's total silence between them, he continued, although in a still more perturbed manner.

"I hurried home—I was in that feverish state of mind, when to think, to pause, is impossible. I felt I must instantly throw myself at your feet, that our fate must be that minute determined. I meant to propose to you to set off for Dover that very night. I had ceased to love *her;* but my mind was torn with contending feelings, my brain was on fire. As soon as I reached home, I rushed up stairs—I heard Pelham's voice in the drawing-room—the door was not closed, my ear caught these words, 'Honour—you may trust me'—(and you will allow those are awkward words for a husband to overhear addressed to his wife.) I was determined to be satisfied at once—to have all doubts removed. I burst into the room; and my worst suspicions were confirmed. Pelham had hold of your hand; you were close to him; your head rested on him—you were violently agitated—both started on seeing me—you were both evidently discomposed, and thrown off your guard. Was it strange that I converted all this into evidences of guilt? I had just enough command over myself not to speak. You attempted some excuse for the situation in which I found you. Your effrontery surprised and shocked

me. At that minute, I totally forgot your wrongs and my own conduct, and I only considered myself as basely betrayed and injured. Pelham then followed you to the door of your own room; he said something to you in a low voice—again he took your hand. All that before my face was too much. I wonder how I contained the rage that burned within me. I felt that I could not then discuss the matter with him, and I left the house like a madman. I paced up and down the street, and watched for Pelham's departure before I returned home; giving way to all the delirium of passion, and distracted by all the misery of doubt. My first impulse was to write to him, imperiously to demand an explanation of his conduct, and satisfaction for my injured honour. Heavens! to think that I sought an opportunity to deprive of life Pelham, my best, my tried, my devoted friend! I passed the night writing letter after letter to you both, and destroying them as fast as I wrote. By degrees, however, my passion cooled; I sometimes thought, and fondly hoped, I might be mistaken. When I recalled to mind my friend's strict principles of virtue and integrity—principles that had so often made me blush for my faults—I could not think that what I suspected was possible, strong as appearances were against you both. Your virtues too, Emmeline, your look of artless innocence, haunted me. How could I reconcile your present supposed conduct with all those perfections which I had so admired in you?

"Hours passed on, daylight returned. The servants began to stir about the house. I heard footsteps in the room above—in your room, Lady Fitzhenry. Every minute I expected some message from you, some note, some explanation in short; and kept my letter to Pelham unsealed, still hoping I might have been in error, and that something would undeceive me. I soon, however, heard preparations for your departure; your leaving my house thus, without even taking leave of me, I interpreted into a decided resolution on your part that a final, formal separation should take place between us. You

had said you were going to Charlton. I sometimes hardly believed that you were really going there, and, in frantic moments, I suspected the worst. But at others, when my own conduct forced itself on my mind, when I reflected on your wrongs, I then thought that, exasperated probably by my ill treatment, you were leaving my roof for ever, determined, perhaps, that the law should dissolve an union which had been but a source of misery to you, in order that you might legally unite yourself to the man you loved. Again, had not pride restrained me, I would have sought that explanation which I longed for, and then all would soon have been understood between us; had our eyes but met, we must, at that moment, have read each other's heart; but in proud, sullen silence, I awaited some opening from you.

"None came; at length your carriage drove up to the door; I heard your footsteps on the stairs; you stopped at my door; my heart beat to suffocation; I thought, nay, I felt almost sure that you were coming to me; my hand was actually on the lock to open it; just then I heard one of the servants speaking to you, you passed on—I heard the carriage-door shut, and you drove off. I felt that we had parted for ever; and, when too late, I regretted the blessing I had thrown away.

"My Emmeline, I am not *now* ashamed to own to you, that I wept in bitterness of heart.

"The instant you were gone, in desperation I sealed and directed my abominable letter to Pelham. I ordered post-horses directly, desiring that the carriage should follow me to his lodgings. On arriving there, I learnt he was gone out of town. This confirmed all to me; I tore open my letter, said we could never again meet but in *one* way, and for *one* purpose. That I was going instantly to Arlingford, that he might there follow me, and give me the satisfaction I demanded, unless indeed he was already far off with another.

"How perverse is human nature! Man's nature at least. On my arrival at Arlingford, I missed you whom I had always

before shunned, at every turn. I missed the gentle being who had so long, so patiently submitted to my most impertinent vagaries. I missed my poor victim! Every room, every inanimate object recalled her who would have given to all such a charm! I spent hours in your room, Emmeline, in useless, tormenting regrets. In that room which I had hitherto avoided with such care! Alternately condemning myself and you, I felt that I had lost every thing—I was completely miserable!"

Greatly exhausted by this narration, during which Fitzhenry had often been interrupted by his cough, he leant back on the couch. The door at that moment gently opened, and Pelham appeared. On observing the very visible signs of emotion on both his friends' countenances, he was again hastily retreating, when Fitzhenry called to him— "No, come in, Pelham; what we were talking about need be no secret from you, for indeed you are principally concerned. I was telling Emmeline all my history. In other words, confessing all my faults; and as you are, God knows, well acquainted with both, I wish you would relieve me, by bringing the narrative to a conclusion; I have owned to her all my strange fears and fancies, my suspicions even of you. Can you, Pelham, ever forgive and forget them? can you forgive the ravings of a madman, for such they now appear to me to have been."

"Don't be too humble in your apologies to me," said Pelham, smiling—"for I am not sure how far I am myself innocent, if it is guilt to esteem, to admire, to———" Pelham stopped, for a minute. "In short," added he—"I had more than half a mind to punish you, Fitzhenry, for your extreme stupidity; and endeavour myself to win the pearl of great price which you rejected; but, from the first, I had, luckily for me, penetration sufficient to discover that the attempt would be perfectly hopeless."

Pelham said this in the light tone of pleasantry; but, as he spoke, his eyes glanced mournfully on Emmeline, and a slight

tinge of red momentarily suffused his sallow cheek. But his emotion totally escaped Emmeline's observation, whose eyes and attention were entirely fixed on her husband, fearful of losing a word or look.

Fitzhenry, however, saw all; his eye moistened as he held out his hand to his friend, and warmly pressed his within it. "Well, Pelham, now you must take up our history from my sudden departure for Arlingford, where you found me; and do not spare me; I deserve thoroughly the worst you may be tempted to say of me."

"Don't be afraid, my good friend," replied Pelham; "I am, you know, not apt to compliment you.—Well, Lady Fitzhenry, to go back to that fatal Saturday night: Fitzhenry had appeared in so strange a mood when we then parted, so agitated, so unlike himself, that I had determined to be in Grosvenor-Street early next morning; but the arrival of a courier from the Continent with dispatches of importance, obliged me directly to repair to our foreign minister's: he was, I found, gone to his villa at Putney; thither I followed him, and was there detained so long on business, which could not be deferred, that I did not get back to town till late in the afternoon. I drove straight to Grosvenor-Street, and learnt, to my surprise, that both of you had left London—but not together. I feared something disagreeable had passed, and when I reached my own house, I found Fitzhenry's letter, which confirmed my apprehensions. I declare, that at first I thought he was mad—and could scarcely guess what he meant, what he could allude to. Although obliged in four-and-twenty hours to leave England, yet I could not go without seeing him, without endeavouring at least to clear up all this sad misunderstanding; and I lost no time in repairing to Arlingford. It is fortunate that I am by nature blest with a very calm temperament, otherwise this meeting might possibly have ended in our running each other through the body.

But Fitzhenry and I had been too long real friends for any *unfounded* misunderstanding long to exist between us.

"I at length succeeded in convincing him how perfectly absurd and unjust his suspicions were, as far as I was myself concerned. But there, my powers of persuasion ended: he would listen to nothing I could say about you, Lady Fitzhenry: you hated him, he said; if it was not me whom you preferred, it was some one else. You were quite changed towards him—he could hardly blame you, but things had now gone too far to allow of any hope of reconciliation. You had left his house in anger, just anger—gone to your father's; had probably told him all, intending no doubt to insist on a formal separation—on a divorce. Perhaps legal proceedings were already commenced against him. And whatever he might suffer, he could, and would, only acquiesce in whatever you chose to dictate.

"Fitzhenry then repeated to me, again and again, all his *proofs* of your indifference and dislike,—all which were only proofs of his own blind infatuation. In short, poor fellow," added Mr. Pelham, smiling—"he talked a great deal of nonsense. However, at last, by setting up my proofs in opposition to his, I succeeded in extorting from him an agreement, that he would go with me directly to Charlton. I was first to see you alone, and he promised that he would then be guided by my judgment as to his own conduct. The carriage which was to convey us to you was actually at the door, but, unfortunately, Fitzhenry, who was in a state of diseased anxiety, and restlessness of mind, insisted on waiting for the arrival of the post; it brought no letter from you (which was what he had secretly hoped for), but one from his father, that immediately destroyed all I had been labouring to accomplish. Gossip had been busy with you and your husband; indeed had even brought in my name. The scene which took place at the opera, your both abruptly leaving

town—these circumstances, put together, and enlarged upon, had been formed into a regular story of rupture, elopement, duel, and the Lord knows what, till at last it found its way into the newspapers, I was told; and thus reached Lord Arlingford, who, much alarmed at the report, wrote directly to his son, entreating him to consider well what he was about; to break off immediately a connexion which was now become so public, and consequently so disgraceful, and endeavour to be reconciled to his wife.

"So far all was well; but unfortunately the arguments he used were the last to influence your husband's noble mind, for they were those of interest. Knowing Lord Arlingford as well as he did, at any other time Fitzhenry would have treated such a hint with the contempt it deserved; but he was then no way himself—he tore his father's letter into a thousand pieces, and, with a bitter smile, while his face was ghastly pale, said, 'he is right, quite right; it is my *interest* to be reconciled to Lady Fitzhenry—no power on earth shall make me seek her forgiveness—the first overtures must come from herself. Even you surely would not have me go as a beggar, and sue and humble myself to her father: what an honourable appearance would repentance have just now! No, Pelham, I will not do it; and any attempt to persuade me to such a step, I warn you, will be perfectly vain.'

"During our friend's own story," continued Pelham, "I think, Lady Fitzhenry, he has probably let you a little into the secret of his character; and therefore, I may venture to say, that pride is his besetting sin. Had I but hinted this at that time, I suppose he would have knocked me down; but we have him in our power now; and who would believe, seeing him, as he now is, so meek, so humble, so contrite, and subdued, what a perfect devil he was then!"

"Come, come, Pelham," said Fitzhenry, while his pale face was slightly coloured: "you are a little exceeding the liberty I gave—tell the story fairly, but no comments.

Let Lady Fitzhenry find out my faults herself; she will do that quite soon enough without your assistance; indeed, God knows she has had full opportunity already——"

"Lady Fitzhenry has but one fault to find," interrupted Emmeline, as she looked half reproachfully in her husband's face: "it is that you persist in calling her by that cruel formal name."

"Bad old habits, my Emmeline," he replied, smiling; "which, if they offend you, shall be conquered; but I *could* explain why I never *now* pronounce that name without feelings very, very different from those of coldness or dislike; do I not by it claim you as my own? But I want to have done with my history. So go on, Pelham, only remember no annotations and reflections."

"I was ignorant of what had passed between Fitzhenry and Lady Florence," continued Pelham, almost tempted to smile at his friend's sickly petulance: "he had never named her. Had I known of their rupture, I should immediately have entreated you, Lady Fitzhenry, to have come, or at least to have written to him; but not aware of that connexion being at an end, I could not advise a step, which I felt you could hardly take, and which I thought, indeed, would do little good if all was to go on as it had done for some months past. Fitzhenry was seemingly wretched; but so he had long been. I had undeceived him as far as was possible for me to do with regard to your feelings towards him, and I certainly felt it was for him to seek you, and to implore your forgiveness.

"Hopeless, therefore, of bringing about a reconciliation between you at that moment, I informed him of my necessary and immediate departure for the Continent, and proposed his accompanying me; I thought, by that means, the fatal connexion which seemed the bar to your mutual happiness might be broken; and, knowing well your heart, and certain that affection would, with you, get the better of every other feeling, I trusted that time and circumstances would restore you to

each other. Fitzhenry directly with eagerness caught at the idea of leaving England: 'it is the best thing for us all,' said he: 'and it will break to Florence what at present I cannot say—cannot write to her.'

"On our way to town, however, being still unwilling to give up all hope, and still thinking it was incumbent on Fitzhenry to make the first advances to you, I formed a little plan to decoy your husband to Charlton on our road to Dover, and I pleased myself with thinking that I might, by this very allowable artifice, be the means of bringing about your mutual happiness; but something betrayed my scheme; and, as soon as he suspected my intention, he was thrown into a state of violence and irritation of temper, in which I had never before seen him, and which really alarmed me. It was Mr. Benson's presence which he dreaded, I believe: he could have laid his pride (that stumbling-block of his) at your feet, Lady Fitzhenry, but he could not humble himself before others."

"Indeed, Emmeline," said Fitzhenry, interrupting him, "again Pelham barely does me justice; it was not pride that made me dread encountering you. On the contrary, it was shame, fear, humility, and all those perfectly, contrary feelings."

"Poh! poh! don't let him take you in with all that pretty sounding humbug," continued Pelham, laughing. "However, the real truth was, that he was as unlike his real self then, as, I am sorry to say, he is in many respects now. As we proceeded, I became more and more convinced that he was far from well. During the journey, I made little progress with my headstrong companion in my attempts to bring him to reason, and at last his answers became so strange and incoherent, that I was really alarmed; and, on our arrival here, I immediately sent for a physician. He found him, as I had suspected, in a high fever; and I am convinced his illness (brought on probably by agitation) had attacked his brain even before it showed itself visibly in his health; as at Arlingford,

he certainly was in a state of irritation perfectly unnatural to him. Fortunately, the letters I here found enabled me to delay my further journey for a short time, in order to devote myself to him.

"You now know all," continued Pelham; "and whatever my future lot in life may be, it will be one gratifying recollection that I was the means of uniting two beings so formed for each other, and whom I love so entirely."

Mr. Pelham seized Emmeline's hand as he uttered these words, and pressed it to his lips. "Reward my friend for his services to me and to yourself, Emmeline," said Fitzhenry, "by letting him kiss that varying cheek of yours. Can I give a stronger proof that my delirious fever has quite left me?"

Pelham waited not for further leave; he pressed her to his heart, and, as he printed a fond kiss on her forehead, "God bless you, Emmeline,—God bless and protect you both!" he cried, with emotion; "and in your future hours of happiness remember me." Then resuming a more cheerful tone, he added: "And now, my dear friends, that my mind is at ease about you both (for I do not now apprehend a relapse of *any* sort), and that I can leave you, Fitzhenry, in the care of so good a nurse, I must repair to my post, and set off to-morrow morning for Vienna, in case any longer delay should bring me to disgrace—as politics have little respect for the feelings of friendship."

## CHAPTER XIV.

" In vain may art the couch of sickness tend,
Or friendship sigh, or sympathy implore,
Or love, all sanguine, o'er the sufferer bend:
The mortal sinks,—and every hope is o'er!
These brooding thoughts in useless pangs expire;
More soothing sounds let struggling nature hear,
Catch from religion's shrine an holier fire,
And wake to duty, from her trance severe."

After Mr. Pelham's departure, Fitzhenry became very impatient to return to England. He was better certainly, and had regained some degree of strength; for now, leaning on Emmeline's arm, he was able to walk about his apartment; but still he did not seem to recover as rapidly as he should. A degree of varying fever still hung about him; his cough, which the French physician still called nervous, at times exhausted him much, and he had a look of languor quite unnatural to him; his cheek remained hollow, his eyes looked sunk.

Paris, meanwhile, grew insufferably hot; his anxiety to leave it, and his desire for home became so strong—partaking of the feverish longing of illness—that in the hope that the short sea voyage might prove rather beneficial to him than the contrary, it was at last decided that they should set out for Arlingford. They went down the Seine by water, and then hired a vessel to take them to Pool, which was within only twelve miles of their own home. The voyage seemed to do Fitzhenry good, the sea air to refresh him; and, on his near approach to Arlingford, his spirits and animation seemed to return; and Emmeline gazed with delight on the colour in his cheeks, and the sparkling gladness of his eyes; and oh!

how eloquent was their language to her doating heart! what volumes did they tell in one single glance!

Perhaps many would not understand the emotion which made both their hearts beat even to pain, when they entered the well-known scenes of Arlingford;—but, again I repeat it, I address myself only to those who have known the deep feeling of tried affection, the wild enchantment of love. Emmeline fancied she saw sympathetic joy in every countenance, and as she returned the congratulatory salutations of the country people (who, smiling, took off their hats as the carriage passed), she could scarcely restrain her tears. At how many a turn in the road, or well-remembered path or ride, recalling moments and feelings of past unhappiness, did they almost involuntarily look at each other; and how often did Fitzhenry clasp Emmeline's hand in his, and entreat her again and again to forgive him!

Thus buoyant with joy and gratitude, they at last drove up to the door of their own home. Fitzhenry's spirits had been so much beyond his bodily strength, that they had quite exhausted him; so that when he left the carriage, it was with difficulty he reached the drawing-room. As the servants all eagerly pressed forward to give him their assistance, "Poor Reynolds!" he exclaimed, tears starting into his eyes, "I wish I had his arm to lean on now, for how happy he would have been!"

When he was assisted to the couch in the drawing-room, he looked round the apartment for several minutes in silence, and when the door had closed on the attendants, he held out his arms to Emmeline. They could neither speak—but they did not need words to express their feelings; both knew what was passing in the mind of the other, and Emmeline secretly thanked the giver of all good for present happiness.

We poor mortals do well to catch at each passing moment of joy, and feed on them while ours; for alas! how soon do they fade away! and how wretched the condition of those

who, weak in faith, see not the bounty of God in every blessing, and cannot "lift the adoring eye e'en to the storm that wrecks them," relying on the wisdom and mercy of his unsearchable providence.

Fitzhenry had a restless night of cough and fever; and although Emmeline attributed both to the fatigue and agitation of the preceding day, yet she sent off an express for an eminent physician residing at Winchester; and on his arrival, with a beating heart, led him into her husband's apartment. Doctor Harrington, who had formerly often seen Fitzhenry, appeared much struck with the alteration in his appearance he questioned him minutely as to his cough, and other symptoms of his complaint; then, drawing out his watch, he repeatedly counted his pulse. Emmeline, who in breathless anxiety watched every look and word, could not help taking fright at his manner; and her alarm was increased, when, on pretence of writing a prescription, he followed her into the adjoining room, and addressed her with—"Pray Lady Fitzhenry, do I remember right, was not the late Lady Arlingford consumptive?"

Poor Emmeline's blood froze in her veins, and her pale lips betrayed the terror his question had conveyed.

"I beg you will not be alarmed, he added, in a sententious tone, observing her emotion; "Lord Fitzhenry is young; has always, I believe, lived most temperately. At present, I apprehend no immediate danger; but we must be careful. These hereditary complaints are sometimes obstinate, and difficult to deal with."

And thus he went on for some time with the *sang froid* which some of his profession, perhaps naturally, acquire; fancying he could in that manner reassure his trembling auditor. But she scarcely heard him. The sudden transition from joy and the overflowings of her grateful heart, to the dreadful apprehensions which now took possession of her mind, was too violent to be endured.

Almost unconscious what she did, she received from Doctor Harrington's hand his written prescription; and, with an altered countenance, returned to her husband. The flushed crimson of his cheek, the bright, feverish sparkling of his eyes, now made her shudder; and she hid her face at the back of the arm-chair in which he was sitting, fearing she might betray herself.

"Well, Emmeline," said he at last, "what news from Doctor Harrington? he looked prodigiously pompous about me; but I hope he will give me something to stop my cough, and make me sleep: in fact, that is all I now require to be well. But it is wearisome. Last night I never closed my eyes: however, I believe that was the effect of happiness, at being once more at Arlingford, and with you. What does the sapient doctor recommend? Let me look at what he has written. This is all Greek and Hebrew to me," said he, in a light tone, as he returned the paper to Emmeline; "indeed, I hope, for my learning's credit, even more unintelligible—but, Emmeline, are you not well? how pale you look! I think you require a little doctoring as well as myself. You have worn yourself out by nursing me; I will not let you do so any more. Last night you did not leave my room for hours, I know, for I watched you, and at last was forced to feign sleep, in order that you might go and get some yourself. But this shall not be any longer. I really do not now want my servant, or, indeed, any attendance. We will have that little couch-bed moved into my room for you; and no sopo-rific which the doctor can recommend, will make me sleep half so well, as knowing you have that rest which I am sure you need even more than myself."

Emmeline hid her face on the cushion on which his head was lying—she could not speak.

"What, Emmeline!" he continued, "will you not agree to my proposal? Have I said any thing to displease you?

Foolish girl!" and he drew away her hands, that were hiding her face.

On beholding it, he looked at her a moment in silence. His countenance changed. He took her hand in his, raised his eyes to heaven, but said nothing.

The apprehensions which Dr. Harrington's report, guarded as it was, had raised in Emmeline's mind, made her anxious for further advice; and yet she feared to alarm Fitzhenry by proposing it: but at her first word he understood her, and calmly said—"Do whatever you like, whatever will ease *your* mind." And she wrote immediately to Doctor Baillie.

During the days that passed till his arrival, she made an effort to throw back from her heart the miserable anxiety that was oppressing it, and to pursue her usual occupations. Many a burning tear stole down her cheek in silence and solitude; but she always met her husband with a smile; and if he ever saw traces of her feelings on her countenance, he forbore noticing them.

With sensations of apprehension not to be described, Emmeline, at last, on the day he had appointed, saw Baillie drive up to the door. She felt that her fate hung on his opinion. Dr. Harrington had come to meet him; and after a short private conversation between the two medical men, they proceeded, with Emmeline, into their patient's room. Fitzhenry welcomed them with cheerfulness; talked for some time of the news of the day, and on indifferent subjects, to Baillie; and then turning to Emmeline, who had been unequal to the exertion of a single word during their conversation,—

"Lady Fitzhenry," said he, "you must leave me to say my catechism to Dr. Baillie alone. I want too to make serious complaints of you," added he, gaily; "of your obstinacy and disobedience; of the way in which you sit up all night, destroying your health and bloom."

Baillie made some attempt at a compliment; but his kind heart felt for the anguish he saw painted on her counte-

nance; and, unable to answer him, Emmeline in silence left the room.

Those who have felt their very existence depend on one word, may imagine how she passed the cruel, anxious, long half-hour that now elapsed. At length, the door of her room slowly opened, and Fitzhenry himself, leaning on his stick, came in alone. His face was flushed; and though he forced a smile, on entering, Emmeline plainly read in it an expression that was like a death-knell to her heart and hopes. She flew up to him, and helped him to a couch. After a moment's pause, drawing her towards him—

"Emmeline," said he; "dearest! we have suffered too much, and too long, from concealing our feelings from each other, for me to have courage to undertake to keep another secret from you, although it is one which I know will pain you." Emmeline's pallid face showed she was but too well prepared for what he was going to say. "I have for some time suspected my real situation," added he; "but I was determined to learn the truth; and I knew Baillie's sensible upright honesty would not, at my serious request, conceal it from me. I required of him to give me his candid opinion as to my health."

Fitzhenry paused; Emmeline clung to him, as if to stifle what more he had to say; but he continued, though in a faltering voice.

"I had hoped it might have been otherwise; I had hoped, for your sake, that we might have been allowed to live for some little time at least, happily together; but that God whom you have taught me to worship and submit to, no doubt judges wisely; and, we must, I fear, look to our approaching, final separation."

At these words, poor Emmeline could no longer command herself; an agonized scream escaped from her bursting heart, as she sank on the floor before him.

"My Emmeline! my dear Emmeline!" he cried, endeavour-

ing to raise her in his feeble arms—"Spare me—I entreat you—I cannot bear to see you suffer thus—have pity on me."

"I will, I will," she almost convulsively exclaimed, "but this is too—too much for me."

"You mistake me, Emmeline," said he, endeavouring to calm the agony he had caused. "There may be hope yet; Bailie is, you know, famous for seeing every thing *en noir*—he was very plain-spoken with me, for I forced him to be so; but recollect, Emmeline," added he, endeavouring to cheer his voice, "even Baillie may be mistaken, and while there is life there is hope: before winter, we are to go to a warmer climate; you will pray to heaven for me, and your prayers, dearest, will perhaps be heard. They have already once restored us to each other; they may do so again. I should not have said all this to you, I believe, but it is so necessary to me now to conceal nothing from you, that I could not have borne the load alone; but, for God's sake, dear Emmeline, compose yourself, and for my sake, bear up."

And for his sake, she did exert herself; for of what is the female character not capable, when nerved by strong affection? All was settled for their leaving England the beginning of October, when they were to repair to Lisbon; till then, it was thought that the climate of Hampshire would be better for Fitzhenry than that of Portugal. The season was unusually fine; and, sometimes, when well enough to wander a little way from the house, the balmy air, and cheering sounds and sights of a fine autumn, seemed to revive him; and, if ever he prolonged his walk one yard further than he had done on the preceding day—if he had ever appeared rather more cheerful—his voice stronger—Emmeline, to whose young heart happiness was so necessary, then again, for the moment, gave way to delightful anticipations. Had she ventured to look back, and trace from week to week the rapid progress of the fatal disease, that was fast hurrying its victim to the grave, she could not have indulged even such

momentary gleams of hope; but then, also, she could not have performed her hard task with the courage she did.

Fitzhenry was generally calm, and even cheerful; and he sometimes talked of what they would do on their return to Arlingford, and projected alterations and improvements in the place; but all such plans for the future, usually ended in a sigh, and were listened to in mournful silence by his wretched wife; and although he thus forced himself to appear interested in worldly affairs, yet, by the turn his conversation now commonly took, it was plain to perceive that the whole tone of his mind was completely changed; and when Emmeline proposed reading to him, he always selected such books as led to reflection, to God, and to a future world.

Their wedding-day, the 19th of August, was the last on which he left the house; his exertions to appear cheerful on that day, had been so much beyond his strength, that they had exhausted him. The next, he could not leave his room. A fortnight more, and he could scarcely raise himself from his couch. The end of September came, and the preparations for their departure for Lisbon continued to be made, no one having the heart to countermand them, although it was very evident to all, that he would never quit his present home, but for that, where he would be for ever at rest. As his bodily strength failed, his mind seemed to gain fresh vigour, and to soar above the cares and sufferings of this transitory life. Resignation was an easier task to him, than to the wretched being who, strong in youth and health, was doomed to remain in that world from which she saw her every joy fast departing. But she never complained; she never wept; at least, her tears were ever concealed from him for whom they flowed. With a steady voice, she read to him of the peace, the bliss of heaven—of forgiveness to penitent sinners; and, when she saw her husband's eyes raised to that heaven in humble submission to its decrees, she clasped her hands beside him in silence; and if a distinct prayer escaped from her

meek heart, it was to implore that she might be released with him from this world of suffering.

One night, after she had read to him that beautiful Essay of Miss Bowdler's, on the Advantages of Sickness: "I am sure, Emmeline," said he, in a faint voice, "it will ever be a comfort and joy to you to think, that through your means I have been saved from destruction. When I think what I was only a short twelvemonth ago, I bless God for the change, although brought about by such cruel means. Oh! if I could but live my life over again," he added vehemently: "if I could but feel once more the strength and health of mind and body, of which I made so bad a use; if I could but see you, my own Emmy, the blooming light-hearted girl you were when I married you, when I so cruelly scorned and neglected you, how superlatively happy I should be. But all is over now; the past cannot be recalled, and there is no future for me in this world; and yet, convinced as I am of this, do you know that even now I sometimes, during the long, tedious, sleepless hours of night, still foolishly indulge in vain dreams of happiness, and picture to myself our future life here; I see you admired by every one—the charm, the ornament of my home (for proud, worldly ideas will still cling to me). I fancy I see that innocent beaming smile I once saw—I hear that joyous laugh I used to hear till my unkindness silenced it; in fancy, we ride together, we *waltz* together," said he, forcing a faint smile: "and this perfect earthly bliss, which Providence offered me, I rejected and spurned—spurned you, who would have made my home a heaven to me, and not one word of reproach have I heard from you. Oh! Emmeline, if you were less kind to me, I believe I should suffer less bitterly; that smile, that look of love cuts me to the very soul. There is only one comfort of which you have not been deprived by me, that of an approving conscience, and the hope of happiness beyond the grave; for in heaven we shall be again united, and by your means. I trust I am not too presump-

tuous, but the entire resignation with which I look to approaching death, though now possessed of everyblessing this world can give, and the hope with which I anticipate meeting you, my guardian angel, in the next, gives me a strong feeling of confidence, that my past errors are blotted out"

Fitzhenry's voice became choked, he sank back and closed his eyes, and for some time they both remained silent.

"I have talked too much," he at length said; "I am rather exhausted, and at times I feel more low without knowing why. I think I shall sleep, so good night; God bless you, my Emmeline:" and he kissed her pale tear-bedewed cheek, then turned his head away, and for about an hour all was quiet. Fitzhenry never moved, and Emmeline trusted he was getting some refreshing rest; he had coughed less that day, his pulse had appeared to her to be quieter; and as she clasped her hands in humble supplication, a faint gleam of hope even then shot through her sorrowful heart.

"Oh! God of mercy, if possible, spare him!" she ejaculated with such fervency, that her lips, unconsciously to herself, uttered the sounds. Fearful that she might have disturbed him, she went softly to the couch on which he was lying. He directly held out to her his feeble hand: "I am not asleep," said he, in a hollow altered tone, that made her shudder; "I cannot sleep. I heard your prayer, my Emmeline, but it cannot be; the decree is past; and, while yet I can, I have a favour to ask of you, though I am sure, beforehand, you will grant it. In my writing-desk you will find a letter—when I am gone—send it to—to Florence. Do not start, dearest,—it is my wish, my last request that you will read it—I have purposely left it open. But I would like to die in peace with all—even with her. A time may come when, like me, she may regret the past; and then it will be a comfort to her to know that I forgave her the evil she was the cause of to us both—and also it relieves my heart to ask forgiveness of her for what injury I have done, what pain I may have inflicted upon

her. As for you, my own Emmeline, I know I should only grieve you if I were to ask for your forgiveness. I am sure I have it," said he, as he imprinted a fond kiss on her quivering lips: "Heaven reward you with its best blessings! When you see Pelham again, you will for my sake be kind to him. Poor Pelham! he loved me most truly!—he loves you too, Emmeline."

Fitzhenry paused, and fixed his languid, glazing eyes on her face; he seemed as if anxious to say more, but he only sighed deeply; and, after a few minutes' silence, taking from under the pillow Emmeline's prayer-book, which he had always kept since that day on which he had renewed to her his marriage vow: "And now, Emmeline," said he, "read to me that prayer for the sick."

In silence she complied, for she had taught her breaking heart to bear such trials: she had learnt to stifle her sobs, to swallow her bitter tears.

"Blessings on thee, my love," he said, when she had finished; "your voice soothes me; your prayers do me so much good. But there is still another I would have you read —that for the dying."

Emmeline looked at him aghast—his countenance had within the last hour visibly changed—death was upon it—her blood chilled in her veins; but, making a desperate effort, with a tremulous voice, broken by convulsive sobs, she began to read. When she came to these words, "Look graciously on thy servant, O Lord! give him unfeigned repentance for the errors of his past life," Fitzhenry's hand pressed Emmeline's more closely with a sort of nervous, convulsive grasp. She continued to read—his hand stiffened—grew cold———all was over———.

A loud shriek brought the attendants from the adjoining room: they raised poor Emmeline's lifeless form from the ground; with difficulty unloosed her hand from that of her husband, and carried her to her bed.

When consciousness, after a lapse of some days, at length returned, she saw her father and mother hanging over her —But Fitzhenry, her adored Fitzhenry, was for ever shrouded in the close, cold habitation of death!

## CHAPTER XV.

Yet still, thou mourner, o'er the death-bed stand,
Still honour, as thou canst, the breathless clay,
Still bring thy flowers, and strew with pious hand,
And weep behind the bier in slow array;
And raise the stone, inscribe the record kind,
And all thy heart's vain tenderness reveal,
And guard the dust, in awful hope resigned,
And bow to heaven, that formed thee thus to feel.

*Extract from a Letter from the Rev. E. Pelham, to Sir George Pelham, minister at Vienna.*

——— "You ask me if I can tell you any thing of Lady Fitzhenry. Being some little time ago on a visit to a friend at Poole, and anxious to be able to give you some more satisfactory account than mere common report, I resolved to drive over one Sunday, and attend divine service at the parish church of Arlingford, as I was told that she was generally there to be seen; and, hearing she lived perfectly retired, I did not like to intrude upon her with the offer of a visit.

"You know it is now nearly a twelvemonth since the death of poor Fitzhenry. The pew belonging to the Arlingford family, the pulpit, and communion table, are all still covered with black, and with the escutcheons and arms of the Fitzhenrys. When the church-bell had done ringing, Lady Fitzhenry, with her father and mother, came into the gallery. A deep black veil at first hid her face and nearly her whole

person; but the church growing very hot, she at length put it aside.

"Had I not previously known who it was, I certainly should not have recognised her. There is no trace of the laughing eyes, of the dimpled cheek, of the fresh gay young countenance, which I was acquainted with. Perhaps it was partly owing to contrast and to the quantity of black by which she was surrounded, but I thought I had never seen so pale a face. Still, though she has already lost much of the fresh beauty of youth, there is a charm in her faded sadness —an air of sentiment over her whole person, that more than compensates. Her hair was parted back on her marble-white forehead; and the only thing about her that was not black, was a gold chain to which was hung a small watch. I am thus particular, for I know you wish for particulars— and I certainly never before paid such attention to the minutiæ of a woman's dress.

"During the service, Lady Fitzhenry appeared engrossed by it as one whose heart's home is in heaven. When it was ended, all seemed respectfully to wait to let her pass; the village children eagerly watching for an opportunity to catch her eye, in order to make their little obeisances, in the hope of a smile or kind word from her in return. I too might then have spoken to her, but a deep feeling of respect for her sorrows restrained me. I feared the sight of me might recall past days, and I did not like to intrude upon her.

"When all were gone, I still loitered in the church, and the clergyman and I at last were left alone. Seeing me examining the Fitzhenry arms with interest, he came up to me; and, after some usual civilities had passed, I asked him whether Lord Fitzhenry was buried in the church.

"'Yes!' he replied, pointing to a marble slab; 'beneath that stone is the family vault. It is now about a year since I read over it the funeral service: and many such sad duties have I performed, many melancholy scenes of death have I been witness to; but never, I think, will the impression of

that day be effaced from my memory. I remember it was unusually fine for the season, the bright sun forming such a striking constrast with the scene. It seemed to be a gratification to Lord Arlingford's feelings to pay every possible outward mark of respect to his son, and in every way to testify his deep affliction for his loss; and, with this idea, he desired that no expense might be spared at his funeral. I don't think that would have been the way in which I should have indulged my grief,' added the respectable old pastor; 'but we show our feelings differently; and certainly nothing could be more impressive than the sight of the long funeral procession, and the waving of the black banners and plumes, when moving slowly down the avenue that leads from the house to the village. The whole parish, even the county for many miles round, attended; for Lord Fitzhenry was much and justly beloved—and many too of course came for the mere show. Of all this costly dismal pageant, what struck me with the strongest feelings of melancholy was, the hearse, drawn by Lord Fitzhenry' s own beautiful horses, which by his father's orders had been trained to a slow pace for the purpose; but, although pains had been taken to break them into their mournful duty, yet, excited and fretted I suppose by the crowd around them, and the trappings with which they were covered, it was with difficulty they could be restrained; and when, at last, they were stopped at the gate of the churchyard, they proudly pawed the ground, and tossed their heads, as in the days when they drew their master in all the pride, of youth and health, totally unconscious of the last sad office they were then performing for him. Lord Arlingford and Mr. Benson both attended, and were much affected, at the ceremony; particularly the latter.

" 'Late in the evening, I was,' continued my narrator—'roused from no agreeable reverie, by being told that Lord Arlingford's carriage was driving through the village towards the church, and that one of the servants had come to beg that

the door of it might be opened without delay; I immediately hurried thither. It was a bright moonlight night, and I saw Mr. and Mrs. Benson, who had already left the carriage, help out of it an almost lifeless figure; they supported her along—for, as you may guess, it was poor Lady Fitzhenry. It seems, that nothing could divert her from the idea of visiting the vault before it was again closed, and at last the desire became so strong, that they thought it best to comply with her wishes. Her hysteric screams, when she threw herself on the coffin, still ring in my ears; and it was with difficulty they tore her away from it. Twice, as if agony of mind had given her more than usual strength of body, she broke from them. I really feared for her reason, under the influence of such wild despair, and, at length, by force we carried her back to the carriage. By Mrs. Benson's desire, I accompanied them to the house: she wished to try the effects of my prayers and exhortations on the poor sufferer. When she was laid on her couch, and had been given some composing medicine, I went to her. It seemed as if all was then over with her in this world. Not a tear fell from her fixed eyes. 'He is gone—quite gone—I shall never see him again—never—never,' she repeated, apparently quite unconscious of her words, and with a horrible composure of voice, although there was wildness in her looks; for she appeared as if gazing on some invisible form. I knelt by her, I read, I said all that I thought was most likely to rouse her from her stupor of grief, and move her feelings; and at last, after one or two convulsive heavings of her bosom, tears came to her relief. She fell sobbing into her mother's arms; and I left that excellent mother to give her all the comfort she was then capable of receiving, that of sympathy and affection!

"The kind-hearted old man here stopped, much overcome with his recollections.

"'Lady Fitzhenry has, I believe, resided here ever since

the death of her husband?' I said, as I saw he had sufficiently recovered himself. 'Yes,' he replied: 'by agreement, and the wording of the deed, which, at the time of Lord and Lady Fitzhenry's marriage, saved this estate from falling into the hands of Lord Arlingford's creditors (it not being, like the rest of the property, entailed), it became hers in the event of their having no children.' 'Does she do much good here?' I enquired: 'has she taken to the only employment left for the unhappy?' 'Oh! she is the friend and hope of all the poor of the neighbourhood,' rejoined the good pastor with fervency: at first, indeed, she was so absorbed by her grief, that she seemed to heed nothing which was passing around her, and I have seen her mechanically bestow charity to any one who chanced to cross her path; but her good mother gradually brought her to make it the occupation and interest of her life. Alas! I fear she has now no other. She is indefatigable in her exertions to do good; and may the happiness she bestows on others be at length repaid back on herself, and at least bring her peace and comfort, if not enjoyment! I understand she is in general quite calm, and even, at times, cheerful; she never, in the most distant manner, alludes to her loss, or to the past year of her life, and hastily turns off all conversation that can possibly lead to any circumstance connected with it; even with her parents, since the very first, she has maintained this same reserve. It seems as if her husband's memory was buried within her own heart, and that she felt the grave had shut too close over such an adored being for its sacredness ever to be disturbed.' I further learnt from my companion, that Mr. Benson has given up all share both in his mercantile concerns and in the banking-house; that his spirits and health seem to be both much broken; that he has lost all his bustling activity, and that he has just purchased a small place in the neighbourhood of Arlingford, intending there to pass the remainder of his days.

"By this time, we had reached the door of the parsonage; its owner invited me in, but I had already loitered much, and could delay my departure no longer. Finding that I could return to my place of destination by crossing Arlingford Park, I gave my name at the lodge, and being admitted, although not without difficulty, I drove as near the house as I could venture. The hatchment darkened the windows of the principal room—many of the others were closed. How different the whole place looked from what it did only a few months back, when I met you there at the time of the large shooting party which Fitzhenry had collected! Poor fellow! I used to abuse him then for his strange unaccountable conduct and coldness towards his pretty, interesting little wife; but I believe others had worked upon him and done mischief there. The place seemed kept in good order as formerly; but all was silent, and had a look of desertion. I did not see a living creature, except some horses at grass, which I recognized to be Fitzhenry's favourite hunters. They eagerly pricked up their ears when I past, and threw back their long-neglected manes, as if a carriage was now an unusual sight; but when I had driven by, they quietly returned to their food.

"I travelled on many miles before I could get poor Lady Fitzhenry out of my head; pondering too with some compunction on a silly report to which I had carelessly given credence. The said report concerned her and you; for you must know, George, that the thoughtless, gossiping world, judging by its own unfeeling self, even while Lady Fitzhenry is still shaded by her weeds, and you are closely fixed at your political post at Vienna, have already married you to each other.

"Remember, I am not so indiscreet as to ask how far this story comes home to yourself. That you admired Lady Fitzhenry was certainly very evident to my observation; bnt how far that admiration may lead you in forming wishes for the future, I can't pretend to say. Indeed, I almost fear the account

I have now been giving, may destroy, or a least throw the gloom of doubt over some flattering vision of connubial bliss. For (I may be mistaken), but if I can judge of woman's countenance, and by it of woman's constancy, I should say, the first could never beam with joy again, and that her every affection is for ever buried in the grave of her husband.

"Time will prove whether I am right; for your sake, I hope I am not."

THE END.

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Scott, Caroline Lucy,

A marriage in high life

Paris 1836

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